

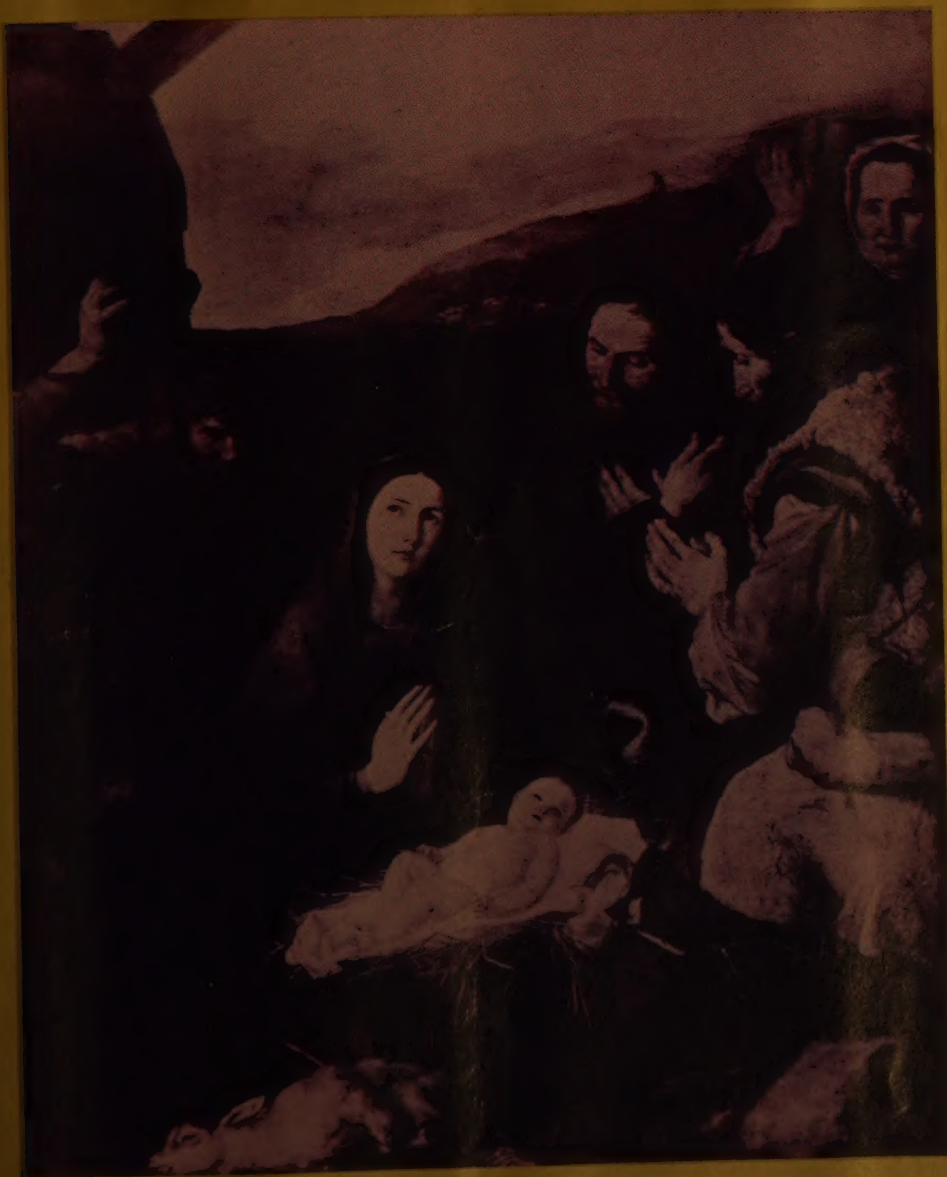


The

Magazine for the Christian Home

Hearthstone

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The Magazine for the Christian Home Hearthstone

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Christmas Prayer

Let us see more than
Presents gaily wrapped,
Piled high beneath an
Ornamented tree.
Let us see more than
Holly wreaths and canes
And Santa Claus
Shouting merrily
On city streets. May --
We recall instead
A tropic night, a
Star, a manger bed,
A gentle king. May
He come and abide
Within our humble
Hearts this Christmastide.

S. W.

What's Here? I think that the Christmas issues of *Hearthstone* are the most fun to prepare, because we try to make them extra special and meaningful for you.

Five thespians in your family will have a chance to display their histrionic talents by reading aloud a Christmas play called "Good News in Bethlehem." I'm rather partial toward the author, who happens to be my mother, Frances Dunlap Heron.

Nancy and Bill, two steadily dating teen-agers, come to the conclusion that Christmas gift giving is too unsentimental and perfunctory, and decide not to exchange gifts this year. Be sure to have your teen-agers read the youth article in story form, "Christmas Experiment," by Roy Hanson.

Evelyn Smith Jessmer has written an interesting, informative article on how some of our church hymns came to be. We're sure that you'll enjoy reading "Hymns in Human Experience."

Every year when Christmas rolls around, parents of small children are asked, "Is there a Santa Claus?" Hildreth Shaw Frost has dealt with this problem in a very helpful way in her article "I Believe in Santa Claus." Recommended for all bewildered parents with youngsters who are dubious about jolly old Saint Nick.

Turn to page 15 for some inspirational Christmas poetry. If you plan on giving a Christmas party, Loie Brandom has suggestions for you in "A Lucky Star Party."

Hearthstone wishes all of you a very merry Christmas, and may you celebrate it in a Christian way.

S. W.



Let the Real Christmas Prevail

by Frances P. Reid

"If merchants can start so early to promote their products, should we not begin at least as soon to emphasize to our children the real meaning of Christmas?"

Before the last scraps of the Thanksgiving turkey have been eaten, merchants all over the country are focusing attention on Christmas shopping. In many cities Santa Claus comes to town on the following Saturday, and his arrival is marked by the preparation of floats for a miles-long parade.

During the weeks preceding the special season the methods of arousing interest in the laggard shopper will range from blatant sales promotion to the broadcasting of carols. Spectacular show window displays, fantastically beautiful toylands, and lavish street lighting will compete for the shopper's praise. Vacant lots will be jammed by an arrangement of pine, balsam, juniper, and cedar trees, trucked hundreds of miles from the frozen northland—all this in order that we might be persuaded to spend more than we can afford for gifts to both distant and close friends and relatives and, in so doing, help to make possible the biggest sales that stores will chalk up for the twelve months' period.

If merchants can start so early to promote their

products, should we not begin at least as soon to emphasize to our children the real meaning of Christmas? Will not the day mean more if we have gone through a season of preparedness? Can we not make Christmas more than a day for the exchange of gifts, greetings, festive dinners, and parties?

Perhaps we might begin with a family hour set aside on each of the four Sundays preceding the sacred day. Suppose we select one room of the home—the rumpus room, the playroom, the nursery, or a bedroom—as an area where we can establish suggestive decorations and have room to gather.

Across one wall of the room, stretch a canvas or a sheet on which we tape or pin cutouts of the sleigh, the reindeer, Santa, toys, and other associations. Even the youngest will enter into the spirit of arranging such a background.

While we talk of the centuries-old legends surrounding the fabled Santa Claus, bring in the facts that he is a symbol of giving; that giving is an outgoing expression of our love and that gifts are ren-

dered without thought of return. This is the time to read together some of the well-loved stories that never grow old: *The Visit from St. Nicholas*, by Clement C. Moore; *How Come Christmas*, by Roark Bradford; or *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens. We may talk of the legends of other lands and of the similarity among Kris Krinkle, St. Nicholas, Father Christmas, and Santa Claus. We may speak of the different customs: the wooden shoes of Holland, the Twelfth Night in England, and the piñata of Mexico.

For the second Sunday the wall may carry arrangements of stars of all sizes. Cutting these from foil or colored paper is within the reach of the very young children. If possible, use a blue cloth or paper for a background.

On this night tell the story of the wise men of the East who looked for a Messiah and who followed the movements of the heavenly bodies, trying to ascertain the time of his coming. This provides opportunity to discuss the longing that people felt for a savior and a way of life that they had never known. Because the wise men came from such a great distance, you may wish to comment on the universality of the longing. Historians tell us that even in the history of China there is a record of the predictions concerning a coming savior. You may read aloud the beloved story of *The Other Wise Man*, by Henry Van Dyke. Certainly, you will not end without reading the scriptural passages that foretell the com-

ing (Matthew 2:1-12 and, from the Old Testament, Micah 5:2).

On the third Sunday let each one light a candle, as symbolic of the great light that shone in the sky on the night of Christ's birth. Tell of the shepherds watching their flocks on the Judean hillside and of the voice that startled and thrilled them with its message. Read again the passage from Luke 2:8-19 that speaks of the shepherds and from Isaiah 40:11. Much can be said relative to Jewish history: the nomadic life of Abraham and Isaac, the herdsman, Amos, and the shepherd, David. Those who live in the West and have seen the Basque sheepherders leading their flocks to highland pastures will be able to add modern parallels.

For the last of the four Sundays you may arrange a crèche or cutouts on the wall picturing the manger scene. Reserve for this session a complete reading of the Christmas story as it is told in Luke 2:1-19. The cumulative effect of the build-up should be significant preparation for a real Christmas.

Additional projects may be suggested through the weeks. Your family might select a needy family in which the ages of the children correspond to the ages of your own. Take these new friends on a shopping trip and let them have the fun of indicating their wishes. Buy what you can afford within their range of choices, as though buying for yourself and family but knowing that the gifts will find their way to the wide-eyed admirers at your side. Your children will have had the joy not only of giving something desired but of enjoying the anticipatory pleasure and satisfaction of making others happy.

Many families have substituted the giving of treats at Halloween instead of the old ruse of "trick or treat." Getting into the mood of unselfish thoughtfulness several months early, this same group is ready for the suggestion that they go caroling to shut-ins during the Christmas season.

In our own home we always devote several days sorting all the toys and setting aside the new-looking and attractive ones as gifts for the underprivileged. Generally, our boys will choose to give away the toys they like best. By such actions they learn that a gift which is too old to be desirable is not really a generosity at all.

The ways in which we can prepare for Christmas are many and varied. The important factor is that we are concentrating on something other than a highly commercialized, festive season of partying. The real Christmas can come to us only if we are ready in our hearts to accept the Christ.

If the merchants can begin four to six weeks early, cannot we? Have we not much more to sell?

As a family prepare for the Christmas season together.

—Eva Luoma





Good News in Bethlehem

by Frances Dunlap Heron

Time: The night almost two thousand years ago when Jesus was born.

Characters:

Father (Innkeeper)
Mother (Innkeeper's wife)
Reuben)
Judith) their children
Elias)

Scene: A small room in the inn at Bethlehem; also the stable, a rock-hewn cave near the inn. Imagine as you read that your whole family is gathered in a room furnished with a stove and a lamp, both of clay, and mats that unroll to become beds. There are no chairs. To eat, all of you sit around a large bowl of stew and dip with your hand your share into smaller bowl. You sleep fully dressed.

Mother: Come on, children. Your father is ready now to eat supper.

Judith: It's late. I'm hungry.

Elias: Where's my bowl?

Mother: Watch out, Elias. I don't want to spill hot stew on you.

Reuben: There's lamb in it, isn't there? That's my favorite.

Elias: Lamb—lamb—I like lamb!

Father: Then let us all give thanks.

All: O give thanks to the
LORD, for he is good;
His steadfast love endures for
ever!

(Psalm 118:1)

Father: I was so busy I wondered if I could ever stop for supper.

Reuben: Move over, Judith. You're taking up more than your share of the floor. And just use one hand to dip your stew out of the big bowl!

Judith: I'm not taking so much as you are!

Mother: Children, let's not quarrel. I know we're crowded, but it's the best we can do to-night.

Father: Yes, at least fifty travelers would have paid me well if they could have stayed in this small room for the night. I had to say over and over, "No more room."

Elias: Why do so many people come here all at once?

Mother: They must come to Bethlehem to write their names in a big book so that the emperor, Caesar Augustus, can be sure they all pay taxes.

Father: Our Hebrews do not

like paying so much money to Rome. They are unhappy and angry.

Judith: Is that why they shouted at you?

Father: Yes, most of them. But not that man Joseph and his wife, Mary, from Nazareth.

Judith: Oh, she was the one riding on the donkey.

Elias: She smiled at me and asked my name and how old I was.

Mother: I felt sorry for her—she looked so tired.

Reuben: They will have a hard time finding a place to stay anywhere around Bethlehem to-night.

Judith: They do have a place! You were away at the well drawing water. So Elias and I took them to the stable.

Reuben: Stable?

Father: Yes, that old cave back of the inn. I first said, "No more room." But Joseph stood there pleading, "My wife must rest"—and then I thought of the stable.

Elias: I carried some straw for them to sleep on. They said it was a good place.

Judith: The woman said she



would be glad to see Bethlehem tomorrow in daylight. But there's nothing so great about Bethlehem. Nothing exciting ever happens here. I'd like to see Jerusalem!

Reuben: Bethlehem may too be great! At school our rabbi read to us the words of the prophet Micah that some day a Messiah will be born here. He'll drive the Romans out, and we Hebrews will be free again!

Mother: Sh-h-h, Reuben. We never know when a spy may report such talk to the Roman authorities.

Elias: Mother, what does it mean to be a "messiah"?

Mother: It means "anointed one"—a savior—a leader to help people.

Judith: Like a king?

Mother: Sh-h-h! Now I shall take these bowls out of the way, and you, Reuben, can unroll the mats.

Judith: We'll be crowded, all of us sleeping on this tiny floor.

Mother: We should be thankful we have even this.

Elias: Instead of being out in that old cave. But I'm not sleepy, Mother.

Reuben: That's what you al-

ways say, and then you're the first one to go to sleep. Here's your blanket.

Elias: We haven't said our prayer.

Father: You are a good boy to remember. Let us all speak to God together.

All: Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
Praise the LORD!
(Psalm 104:19, 35b)

Reuben: Are you going out, Father?

Father: Yes, I must take one more look around the courtyard and fasten the gate.

Reuben: May I go too?

Father: No, son. It is already past bedtime, and you will be waked early in the morning by travelers. Good night, my children.

Children: Good night, Father.

Judith: Mother, do you think the man and the woman in the stable are lonely?

Mother: No, they have each other and their donkey, so they can pretend the cave is their own little house.

Elias: I want a drink.

Reuben: Watch where you're stepping, Elias.

Mother: Hurry, children. I'm going to blow out the lamp. Oh-h-h, but I'm tired. I hope I do not hear a thing till the cock crows. Good night, little ones.

Children: Good night, Mother.
(Three hours later)

Elias (frightened): Mother! Where's Mother?

Reuben (sleepily): Elias, what's the idea of waking us in the middle of the night?

Elias: I heard a big noise.

Judith (sleepily): What's wrong?

Elias: Mother isn't here beside me!

Reuben: Father's gone too!

Judith: Where are they?

Reuben: I hear someone coming. It's Mother. Here she is now.

Elias: Where were you, Mother? A big noise woke me.

Mother: Probably the shepherds.

Judith: What shepherds?

Mother: Move, Reuben, so I can warm some broth.

Reuben: But, Mother, we ate supper!



—Illustration by Winifred Jewett

Mother: I know. Someone else needs this.

Judith: Who, Mother?

Mother: The young woman from Nazareth—the one named Mary.

Elias: In the cave?

Mother: Yes—with Joseph—and their new baby boy!

Judith: A baby? You mean a baby was born in our stable? Can we see him?

Reuben: How did you know?

Mother: It's all very strange. Some shepherds came pounding on the gate a while ago and waked your father and me. They said that while they were out in the field watching their sheep to-night, a bright light shone all around them, and they heard a voice and saw angels.

Reuben: Weren't they scared?

Mother: Yes, but the voice told them not to be afraid. Oh, here's your father. Maybe he can remember the exact words . . .

Father: "Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior . . . you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

Judith: So that's why the shepherds came here?

Father: Yes, they hurried here; and when I went out to the gate, they were so excited that I could hardly understand them. I took them to the cave, and sure enough, there *was* a baby lying in the manger. He looks like any other baby, and yet there's something unusual about the whole thing—the way Mary had his name already chosen. I heard her tell the shepherds, "His name is Jesus."

Reuben: Jesus?

Father: Yes. It means "God Saves."

Reuben: "God Saves"—why, that is like a messiah. Remember Micah's prophecy—maybe it is coming true, here in Bethlehem!

Mother: Sh-h-h!

Judith: A king wouldn't be born in a stable!

Elias: I want to go see the baby.

Mother: All right, you may all go with me to take the broth.

Father: I came in to get a blanket—

Elias: Let me take my blanket for the baby!

Father: All right, come.

Reuben: Let me carry the bowl of broth.

Mother: Walk carefully.

Elias: Look how bright the stars are!

Judith: Aren't you glad now, Father, that you let Joseph and Mary stay in our cave tonight?

Father: Yes, but I wish that instead I might have been able to give them our best room in the inn. The oldest shepherd said an odd thing to me.

Reuben: What, Father?

Father: He said, "Some day this stable will be known all over the world."

Elias: I want to give the baby my blanket.

Mother: Here we are now. There isn't much room inside, with the shepherds. Can you crawl through?

Reuben: Look at the shepherds—

Judith: They're kneeling—they think the baby really is a king!

Elias: The mother sees us. She's smiling. I want to go up close.

Father: First let us kneel, too. Let us thank God for this new life—begun in our stable this night—a son for Joseph and Mary of Nazareth. Let us pray that he will be a good man.



No Christmas

by Evelyn Witter

The little girl, sober of face and hesitant in action, followed the white-clad milkman around the winding sidewalk. He had picked her up at home just after Mommy had said it was "time," and Daddy had "warmed up" the car. The milkman carried Ruthie's battered overnight case, containing enough clothes for a week.

Almost before they reached the holly-wreathed back door of the big brick Wheeler residence, it opened. A woman stood there. She was older than Mommy, but she wasn't wrinkled or gray old. She flicked Ruthie a half smile, then gave a teacher look at the milkman. "I want a quart of chocolate milk, Joe," she said.

"Yes ma'am! Right away! Thought I'd bring Ruthie over first thing. They kind of hoped the baby'd wait 'till after Christmas so's they could have the holidays together, but the missus had to go to the hospital this morning."

He turned and ran around

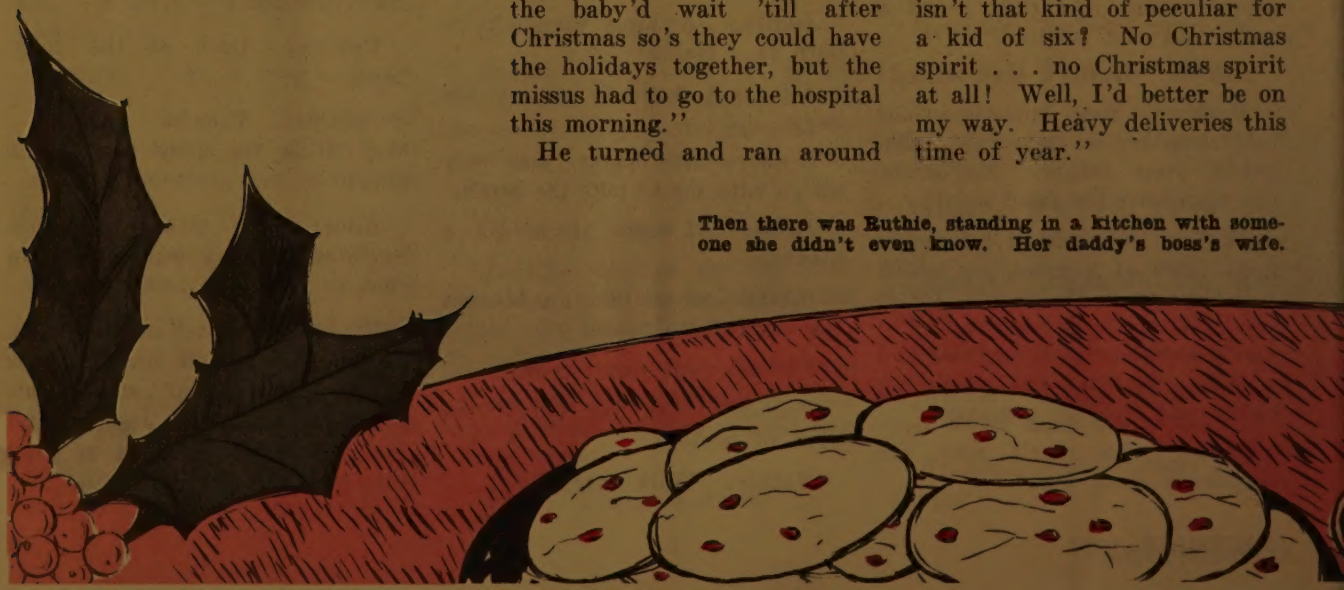
the curves in the walk and was back with the carton of milk before the woman could walk down the five stairs to get the overnight case and put it inside the house.

"Guess they won't have much of a Christmas with the missus in the hospital and him working nights to straighten out the books down at the office. But I guess Ruthie here won't mind much. She's got no Christmas spirit anyway."

Mrs. Wheeler's eyebrows rose up high. Ruthie wanted to tell Joe she didn't like him to say that. She didn't know how to tell him. So he went on talking.

"You know what I asked her? I asked her if she got her orders in for all the presents she wanted. She told me 'No.' She didn't order anything. Not a single thing. Now I ask you, isn't that kind of peculiar for a kid of six? No Christmas spirit . . . no Christmas spirit at all! Well, I'd better be on my way. Heavy deliveries this time of year."

Then there was Ruthie, standing in a kitchen with someone she didn't even know. Her daddy's boss's wife.



mas Spirit

Then there was Ruthie, standing in a kitchen with someone she didn't even know! Her daddy's boss's wife! The Wheelers were the only friends Mommy and Daddy had so far in this new town where Daddy had come to take the job at the big dairy.

"You can put your coat over the chair," the woman said without looking. "I'm baking Christmas cookies, and I put the ones that break or don't come out even and nice, on this plate on the table to eat right away. They're just as good as the others. Help yourself when you feel like it." She didn't mention anything about Christmas spirit.

Just the same Ruthie didn't answer back. She stood at the door and looked around the room. An extra fancy room for a kitchen, with a shiny oven right in the wall, and smooth, color-book blue coverings on lots of counters. That's where the woman was working . . . on most of the counters, rolling



cookie dough and filling cookie sheets.

Ruthie untied the ribbon under her chin and took off her hat. The woman didn't say anything about her boots, but she took them off anyway and put them on the floor next to her hat. She stepped over to the chair that the woman had first pointed to and put her coat there in a neat pile. As she did, she peeked through the archway that led to the other part of the house, and saw a Christmas tree in a silvery stand in front of a picture window.

"When we get to it, we can trim the tree," the woman said, popping the cookies into the oven. "I hope you like to trim Christmas trees. . . ." Ruthie was sure that now she would say something about Christmas spirit, and how bad it was not to have it. . . . "I have all the ornaments in boxes on the floor, and it's hard for me to unpack them all and hang them, too. It'd be rather nice to have help. . . ."

Ruthie threw a quick glance at the woman, but Mrs. Wheeler wasn't looking back. She was so busy putting red dots on cookies that Ruthie had time to look around again. This house smelled a lot like her own house. It had a smell of things growing in dirt, and of soap, and of cookies baking. The spicy cookie smell made her hungry.

The woman walked over to the table and took a messed up cookie. It sounded real crispy when she bit it. "These got a little too brown," she said. "But they're not burned at all."

Ruthie didn't say a thing. Instead she sort of tip-toed over the slick floor toward the shiny-topped table and slid into one of the fat leather chairs. When the woman went to look into the oven again, Ruthie reached out and took a cookie. She sipped her chocolate milk, and it tasted awfully good.

When Ruthie finished another cookie and all of the chocolate milk, she stepped over to the archway and looked at the Christmas tree again. It wasn't so tall, but it was nice and bushy.

"We had a great big Christmas

tree once in our other house away from here. I trimmed it all by myself," Ruthie told Mrs. Wheeler. "I climbed up a ladder and put the Star of Bethlehem on the very top."

Mrs. Wheeler smiled. "It must have been very pretty."

"Maybe I could put your star on," Ruthie ventured, and then remembered about not having any Christmas spirit. Maybe she shouldn't even have asked.

But Mrs. Wheeler said, "O.K. We'll probably have time to do that between buzzers telling me when my cookies are baked."

Mrs. Wheeler knew exactly which box the star was in and gave it to Ruthie to hold while she got a chair from in front of the desk. Ruthie got on the chair and stretched up tall until she could reach the top of the tree. She slipped the star right on the top.

Mrs. Wheeler clapped her hands together and said, "Lovely!"

Ruthie looked up. "Like the star that showed the shepherds where the Baby Jesus was. I love the star. It means Jesus came to earth to bring joy."

The boxes of ornaments were not unpacked. That made them interesting. An urge swept over her to see what was packed in all those boxes.

"Couldn't I . . . could I get the ornaments out now?" she asked hopefully.

"Uh-huh!" Mrs. Wheeler nodded, and at the same time she started running toward the kitchen calling back over her shoulder, "Buzzer!"

Ruthie unwrapped the tissue on the ornaments. They were beautiful . . . red and green and gold, all twinkling with light sparkles. She turned each one round and round. She hoped she would get them all unwrapped before Mrs. Wheeler came back. She worked faster. She wanted to do the whole job by herself. She wanted to get it done before Mrs. Wheeler came back and offered to help.

Mrs. Wheeler came back. She didn't offer to help. She just flicked a look at the ornaments and sat on the desk chair. She reached into a drawer and drew out some

wrapped up presents. She put them under the tree.

"What do *you* want for Christmas?" she asked, beginning to fold the ornaments' tissue papers.

"I really don't want anything . . . not really," Ruthie hesitated, trying not to think about the walking doll with long, golden-brown hair with a pearl crown. "We've moved," she blurted out; and when she got to talking, she couldn't stop. "It costs lots of money to move. Babies cost lots of money."

She glanced up in time to see Mrs. Wheeler's eyebrows rise up high.

Because they stayed up high, Ruthie wanted to explain more. "I like presents. I really do. I made my mother two pot holders in school. I had enough money in my bank to buy my daddy some socks. Maybe . . . maybe that's not enough, though. Like Joe said, I don't have the Christmas spirit."

Mrs. Wheeler's laugh came out soft. Ruthie was just about to ask her how to get Christmas spirit when you didn't have any more pennies when the telephone rang.

Mrs. Wheeler said into the phone: "Yes. Yes! Oh! Thank you!" She looked straight at Ruthie every minute.

When she hung up, she said, "Ruthie. Ruthie you have a new baby sister."

"Oh . . . Oh" Ruthie had to let her thinking catch up. A new baby sister! Then she felt like twirling and twirling, around and around. So she did. All around Mrs. Wheeler's long living room.

She came to a stop in front of Mrs. Wheeler. "I'm so happy! I wish everybody in the whole world could be happy like me." Then thinking about everybody being happy reminded her of something. "That's what Christmas is about, isn't it?"

"About what, Ruthie?"

"Joy in the world?"

"Yes!"

"If I wish everybody in the world to have joy like me, then I have a little Christmas spirit, don't I?"

(Continued on page 28)

Hymns in Human Experience

by Evelyn Smith Jessmer

Here is an interesting article
about how some of our
well-known hymns came to be written

Christianity came into the world on the wings of song, for on that memorable night the angels celebrated the divine grace with "Glory to God in the Highest." Ever since, song has been a powerful means for spreading the gospel of redemption.

Hymns lead people to God, give courage to the depressed, hope to the discouraged, comfort to the sorrowing, guidance to the perplexed. Hymns create and confirm faith. The hymn holds an important place in literature, and the Psalter is the world's greatest hymn book.

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes agreed that the supreme hymn is

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows;
I see from far Thy beauteous light,
Inly I sigh for Thy repose:
My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest, till it finds rest in Thee.

"Behold the Savior of Mankind" was written by Samuel Wesley, father of John and Charles Wesley. The manuscript was rescued in miraculous fashion from the fire which destroyed the rectory in Epworth, England, in 1709. A gust of wind carried the paper out of a window while the flames were at their height, and later, when the rectory was but a heap of blackened ruins, the family found the hymn script in a distant corner of the garden. The verses had been written just the day before the fire.

Twenty-nine years later, Charles Wesley sang his father's hymn at Newgate Prison for two criminals who were to die the next day for their wrongdoings.

"The Sweet By and By" was written in a drug

store in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, in the fall of 1867, at a time when the druggist, S. Filmore Bennett, and a musician, J. P. Webster, were collaborating on a book of church school songs.

Mr. Webster was of an extremely sensitive nature and subject to periods of depression in which he looked upon the dark side of life. Mr. Bennett was sitting at his desk, writing. Presently, he turned and said, "Webster, what is the matter now?"

"It is no matter," he replied. "It will be all right by and by."

The idea of a hymn came to Mr. Bennett like a flash of sunlight, and he said, "The Sweet By and By! Why, wouldn't that make a good hymn?"

"Maybe it would," Mr. Webster replied indifferently.

Turning to his desk, Mr. Bennett penned the words as fast as he could write.

In the meantime, two friends had come in. Mr. Bennett handed the hymn to Mr. Webster. As he read it, his eyes kindled, and his whole demeanor changed. Stepping to the desk, he began writing the notes in a moment. Soon he requested one of the friends to hand him his violin, and he played the melody. In a short time he had the notes for the four parts of the chorus jotted down. It was not more than thirty minutes from the time Mr. Bennett took his pen to write the words, until the four of them were singing the hymn in the same form in which it later appeared.

On a fine summer's day in the first half of the eighteenth century a traveler on horseback, crossing one of the lovely hills of Derbyshire in England, was aroused from his meditations by the voice of singing.

Pausing to listen, these words came on the still air from the valley below:

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.

Instantly, in a clear voice, the traveler sent ringing down the hills the glad response in his brother's words:

The promised land, from Pisgah's top,
I now exult to see:
My hope is full, O glorious hope!
Of immortality.

And then John Wesley and Isaac Watts met and talked together of the deep things of God.

How indebted we are to Watts for "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun," and to Charles Wesley, the brother of the founder of Methodism, for "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

Years of constructive service were given by Dr. Charles N. Sims to the important task of building up Syracuse University. During the early struggles in the development of that institution he served heroically as the chancellor. Later, there followed some years of pulpit activity. Then came the time of retirement from educational and pastoral leadership, and he returned to his native state of Indiana to spend the eventide of life.

When it was evident that the time of his death was near, a member of the family went to the piano and played the hymn he greatly loved. Softly, also, he sang it.

Sun of my soul, thou Savior dear,
It is not night if thou be near.

The second stanza was reached:

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
Forever on my Savior's breast.

Relatives, looking on the peaceful form, then observed that he had quietly answered the call of his Lord.

One Sunday evening in April, 1912, as the steamship *Titanic* was speeding westward on her maiden voyage, the passengers obtained permission from the purser to hold a song service in the saloon. The Rev. E. C. Carter, of Whitechapel, London, was in charge, and a young Scotch engineer presided at the piano. The passengers were asked to make their selections, and, oddly enough, many of the hymns they chose had to do with dangers at sea. There was a hushed tone when they all sang: "For Those in Peril on the Sea."

The service lasted until after ten o'clock; then, as the passengers left for their berths, they exchanged wishes that they might soon reach the end of their pleasant voyage by landing in New York. Little did they realize at the time that only a few miles ahead lay a dreadful peril on the sea—the huge iceberg that sank the great liner. The leader of this service and

his wife were among the hundreds who perished in that great disaster.

During World War II an enemy air raid threatened the destruction of a munitions factory somewhere in England where thousands of women were working. A very tense feeling prevailed, for it was realized that the worst might happen at any moment. Nerves began to break a little, and sobs and screams were heard. Then someone in a far corner began softly to sing:

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly.

The others quickly joined in the song until all were singing softly and quietly. How their voices must have risen as they prayerfully sang these words:

Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:
Leave, ah, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me!

All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

The danger passed; none were harmed.

A blind man was seen crossing the street at a dangerous place in the Bronx in New York City. When a friend approached, he saw that the lips of the blind man were moving; and as he listened, he heard him singing softly, "God will take care of you." The friend made himself known to the blind man, and carelessly inquired, "Why are you singing that hymn?"

He replied, "The reason is that I must cross this dangerous crossing just ahead of me in about a minute, and I was thinking that possibly one of the many wagons or trucks might strike me and I would get killed. But the thought came to me that, even if this did occur, my soul would go straight to God. If he led me across all right, it would be just another evidence of his care of me. So I just could not help singing to myself, 'God will take care of you.'"

The Doxology has, since the time it was written, been sung in many places. In England, during revivals, it was often the custom to sing the lines after every conversion, and once at Sheffield, during a campaign conducted by Billy Dawson, the audience sang it thirty-five times in one evening.

It remained for Charles Wesley to make the most dramatic use of this powerful hymn. While preaching at Leeds, in an old, dilapidated building, to an audience of one hundred people, the floor suddenly caved in with the weight of the people and plunged everyone onto the floor below. Wesley reported: "I slid down softly and alighted upon my feet; my hand was bruised and some skin rubbed off my head, and I lost my senses. But I lifted up my head soon, and saw the people under me heaps upon heaps. I called out, 'The Lord is with us,' and then I struck up singing, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.'"



I Believe in Santa Claus

Parents of all small children should read this, to learn how to cope with the age-old question, "Is there a Santa Claus?"

After Elizabeth had heard his prayers and was about to turn off the light, Tommy suddenly asked, "Mother, is there any Santa Claus?"

She did not answer right away, though she had been expecting to hear this question and had tried to be prepared for it. She sat down on the edge of the bed and tried to think of a right and truthful answer, one which would combine the advice of the psychology columns with a little research she had done on her own, one which would satisfy Tommy. At last she said, "Well, I believe in Santa Claus."

Tommy watched her closely. "Ronald said it was just a big lie." Elizabeth could see he expected her to be shocked.

Instead, she smiled. "I'm very glad you've asked be about this. Do you know why?"

Tommy shook his head.

"Because it means that you're all through being a little boy and that you are beginning to be grown up. When you were little, we had to tell you things in a way that you could understand."

"Is it a lie about Santa Claus?"

"No—it isn't a lie about Santa. It's—It's—." Elizabeth was having just as hard a time finding the word she wanted as Tommy so often did. "It's magic! That's what Santa is—a kind of magic. To be perfectly truthful, he isn't a

real live man."

"But if Santa isn't a real live man, why do you believe in him?"

"The Santa Claus I believe in is the Spirit to others, a Santa that lives in our minds and in our hearts. When you were little, you couldn't have understood that kind of Santa Claus. That's why we told you about him as though he were a live person. Grown-ups have as much fun pretending as little folks have believing. You'll see what I mean, now that you are old enough to pretend with us. Yet, with all our pretending, there is one thing we must keep in mind. Our make-believe Santa represents the spirit of Santa. He stands for an idea, and the idea is very, very real indeed. I think you're old enough to understand now, aren't you, Tommy?"

"Uh-huh. Only—was it you and Daddy who put the toys in my stocking?"

"Yes, just the way mothers and daddies have been doing all over the world ever since the time when a real Saint Nicholas did live on earth."

"Was there a really truly Saint Nicholas?" Tommy's eyes shone as bright as stars.

"Yes. He lived hundreds and hundreds of years ago, about three hundred years after Jesus was born."

"Where did he live?"

"In a place called Asia Minor,

in a district called Lycia (lish'-i-a). His family was rich, yet he grew up to feel a great concern for the poor. As a young man he began doing kind things for people and following the teachings of Jesus. Once he heard of a man who had three daughters. The man was too poor to provide dowries for his daughters, and in those days it meant that the girls would not be able to get husbands. One night under cover of darkness, so the story goes, Nicholas left a bag of gold for one of the daughters. Later he left a bag of gold for the second daughter, and finally a bag of gold for the third."

"That was something like Santa Claus leaving presents, wasn't it?" asked Tommy.

"Yes, and I think that was how the idea started. But there is more to the story of Nicholas. He became a Bishop in the Christian church, in a city called Smyrna, and he persuaded many, many people to become Christians. As a matter of fact, because of his faith and influence he was imprisoned for a time. Even in prison he won many friends. Not only was he kind and generous, but he is credited with having performed many miracles of healing. His fame spread all over the world, and the marvelous tales about him were told and retold in every country. The date of his death, December 6, became a Feast Day on the calen-

dar of all Christian people. The name, Saint Nicholas, was changed to fit each language."

Tommy was puzzled. "I thought December 25 was Christmas Day."

"That's right, Tommy. December 25 is the day set aside as the birthday of Christ, and that is why it is called Christmas Day. You see, actually, Christmas Day and Saint Nicholas Day are separate holidays. In many countries they are celebrated separately, so that children get their presents from Saint Nicholas almost three weeks before Christmas."

"Why do we have both days at once?"

"Because we have come to believe that the spirit of giving fits very well into the celebration of the birthday of Jesus, for this spirit is one of the things that the words and the life of Jesus taught. The strange thing is that we came pretty close to having neither day."

"Why?" Tommy looked worried.

"Well, the New England colonists considered the Christmas celebration as pagan—that is, not according to the belief in God and Jesus—because so many of the customs and the decorations had come straight from the pagan festival of the Romans. The Puritans were very strict people, and they made a law forbidding people to celebrate Christmas."

"Oh, that must have been awful!" cried Tommy.

"Well, later they changed their minds and were able to forget the old symbols and to think of the new meaning. The Dutch settlers were largely responsible for this. Our modern Santa probably came to us from the Dutch people, for they were jolly and fun-loving and they believed in a jolly Saint Nicholas. In their language his name was 'San Nicolaas.' Soon he came to be called 'Sankt Klaus,' and as time went on, 'Santa Claus.' Here's something you can try just to see how easy it is for a name to change as years go by. You try saying, 'San Nicolaas,' 'San Nico-

laas' over and over again as fast as you can."

Tommy tried it. He started with saying "San Nicolaas" very plainly, but after he had said it four times it began to sound different. Pretty soon he found himself saying "Santa Claus."

"Oh, ho!" laughed Tommy. "That's funny." And he tried it again.

"That's the way a word can change as it comes down through the centuries. So stories change as they are told from one generation to another. And so it is with the stories about Saint Nicholas. Each country has its own. Here in America we have a story that is different from most of the others. The Santa we know travels in a sleigh pulled by eight reindeer."

"Nine counting Rudolph," corrected the boy.

"That's right. Nine. No doubt the story will continue to change more and more, what with space ships and all." Elizabeth was a little sad as she said this, but she brightened as another idea occurred to her.

"There's one thing, though,

that hasn't changed and never will. And that's the real meaning of Santa Claus—the spirit of giving, of making other people happy by taking the time and the trouble to give them some little gift or to send them a card saying, 'Hope you have a Merry Christmas.' Wherever Santa's spirit is in the heart of the giver, Santa's magic touches the gift. This is the same kindly spirit that the Christ Child brought into the world.

"That's what mothers and fathers discovered all those many years ago when they first tried to do for their children what Saint Nicholas had done for so many people. That's the way it is today. Mothers and fathers love their children, but they know that it's lots and lots of fun for little folks to talk about Santa, to hang up their stockings, and to have visions of sugar plums dancing through their heads. Didn't it make you happy, Tommy?"

"Yes, siree!"

"Then there comes a day when every little child asks, 'Is there

(Continued on page 28)

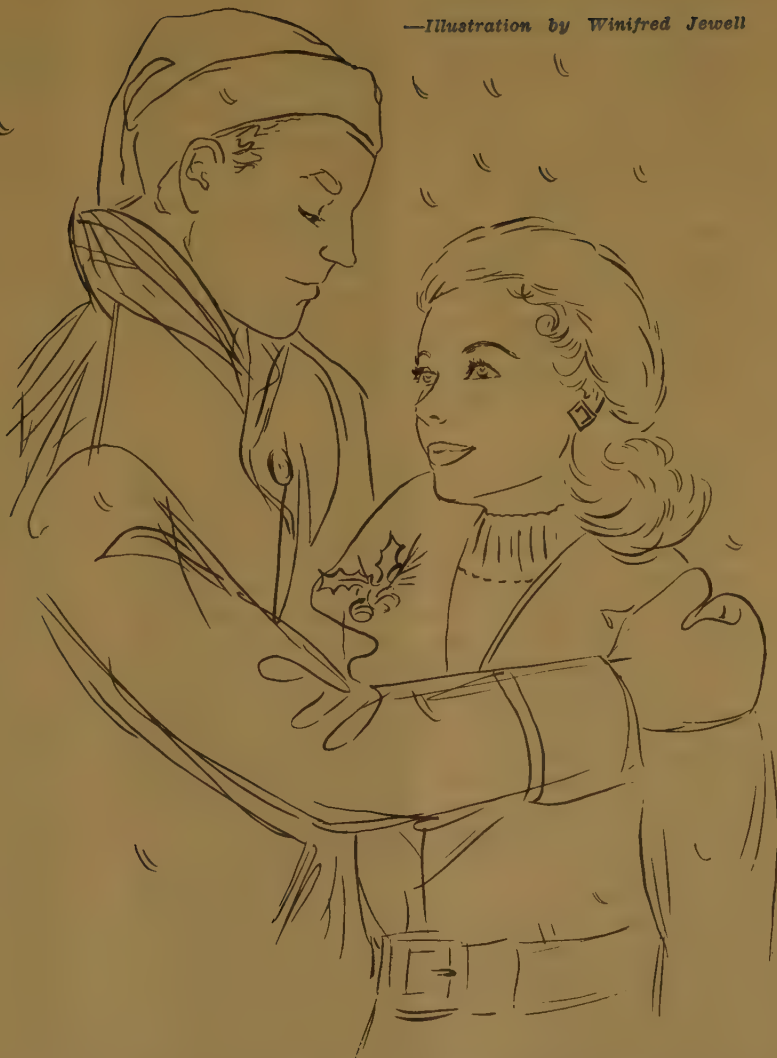
Santa Claus is part of the magic of Christmas for young children. It is no "lie" to tell them that there is a jolly old gentleman who has a sleigh and eight reindeer. Nevertheless, when children get old enough to question this myth, they should be told the facts tactfully and intelligently.



Photo by
Eva Luoma

CHRISTMAS EXPERIMENT

by Roy Hanson



"There they are! Slipped out ahead of us. Hey, you two, aren't you going down to the drugstore?"

Dick turned to see the members of the youth group pouring out of the church. Bundled in their heavy coats, jackets, and warm winter caps, they looked rather picturesque moving out into the beam of light from above the church door, large snowflakes falling all around them. "Not tonight, gang," Dick called back. "I think we'll just walk and think about the discussion."

"All right, lovers, we know how it is." That was Benny, a sassy sophomore. Dick stooped over for a handful of snow and packed it into a ball. He aimed quickly and threw a strike which curved to catch the shoulder of Benny's leather jacket as he tried to get away. Then Dick caught Nancy's hand, and with a laughing farewell they fled from the barrage of snowballs aimed in their direction.

When the snowballs had stopped, Dick slowed to a walk. His throat felt like solid ice as he took big gulps of cold, winter air. He looked at Nancy. "You don't mind do you? I mean, maybe you wanted to go to the drugstore."

"A walk will be fine." She drew a deep breath. "Whew!" She smiled and shook some snow from her blond curls.

They walked on for a block, holding hands, enjoying the beauty of the snow as it fell, blanketing roofs, branches, and shrubbery.

Nancy Spurgeon turned her head to look questioningly at Dick. "Did you want to talk about the discussion?"

"Yes, what did you think of it?"

"Oh, I agree with what everyone said, I guess. How about you?"

Dick's brow narrowed. Nancy knew that he was in another of his deep thinking moods. It was because he thought so deeply that some people didn't understand him. "I agree with it, too. That's just it, everyone agrees, but so what? All we accomplished tonight was to toss around the old platitudes about how Christmas is too commercialized and how we should get back to the real meaning of it. But what good is talk? It's time somebody stopped talking about it, and did something about it!"

"It's just like you to think of that." In their three months of dating, since beginning their junior year of high school, Nancy had known many fine things to come from the mind of Dick Wiesler. "What do you think could be done?"

"I don't know," started Dick, "but it seems to me, from the crazy rush and pushing around which I've

seen at Peterson's, that the whole corruption of Christmas centers around this business of giving presents."

Nancy nodded. "I suppose it will seem even more that way after tomorrow, when you start working there full time for vacation."

"I can imagine, a week and a half of nothing but Christmas shoppers. I dread the thought. Do you know what their attitude is? One woman said, 'Oh, let's get George one of these ties and get him out of the way.' A teen-age girl came to me and asked if I would help her pick out a present for a friend she absolutely couldn't stand. Real Christmas spirit! I tell you Nance, this whole gift giving business is a farce."

Dick didn't like what he had said. He felt even more uneasy about what he was going to say. But he felt he was right. He had to be. "Nance, this may sound radical or something, but I think the only thing for the person who wants to do something about it is to reject the whole thing and not buy presents. Maybe I'm just bitter from seeing too much of those who are buying the stuff and those making the money on it. I catch myself going for every penny's worth of sale I can make, so I'll be able to get a nice letterman's jacket like the rest of the fellows. There's commercialization of Christmas for you," his fist came up to thump his chest, "right here!"

A few minutes later Nancy and Dick started up the walk to the front door of the Spurgeon home. He was not sure what she might be thinking. She had made no sign. "It does sound crazy, doesn't it," he offered, "not giving gifts I mean?"

She was thinking quite hard. "No, in fact I think it's right. I just wonder if the folks would understand though."

"Mine wouldn't." He spoke hurriedly. "I guess the festivities meant a lot to their families in the old country. If I were to stop giving Christmas presents, they would probably think I had lost my Christianity. They would not understand that I was trying to strengthen it."

"Little Tommy would hardly understand if he didn't get a present from me. I do think in a way you are right though."

Dick wheeled suddenly and caught her shoulders in his hands. "I've got it! Let's give gifts to the others, but save Christmas for something else between ourselves. Instead of giving presents to each other we can go to church together for the Christmas morning worship, and—"

"And sing carols around our piano," Nancy chimed in. "The folks told me to invite you over for Christmas afternoon."

"Then maybe we could go coasting on Jacob's Hill after we have sung for awhile." He looked straight into her eyes. "So we give each other no presents. We'll experiment with it for one year anyway. Is it a deal?" They sealed the contract with a light kiss.

Christmas morning was cold and clear. It would

have been still also, except that Dick Wiesler was whistling gaily as he strode along to get Nancy for church. The words, "Deck the halls with boughs of holly," ran through his mind. This was Christmas, and what a glorious Christmas it was! Nancy was a wonderful girl.

Nancy smiled as she opened the door. "Merry Christmas! Come in. I just have to run back to my room for my purse. Then I'll be ready to go."

Dick stamped snow from his boots and stepped into the house on some newspapers spread just inside the door. "No hurry," he told her. "We have twenty-five minutes until church time."

As soon as she had left the room, Dick grinned to himself and reached into his coat pocket. He found what he wanted, and carefully brought it out. He looked at his watch to see that there were still twenty-three minutes before church time.

Nancy's footsteps sounded in the next room. She appeared around the corner and stopped, as suddenly as though she had turned into a wall, staring blankly at Dick. He returned her stare, and then both of them laughed merrily as they realized what had happened. Dick knew that the large, gaily wrapped package which Nancy held in her hands was the satin letterman's jacket, just as much as she knew that the small tissue-wrapped box in his hand contained the necklace which she had admired in the jeweler's window. They pushed the packages at each others, however, as though they contained the darkest of secrets, and with amused excitement watched each other go through the ritual of opening gifts.

After the silent awe and pretended surprise, Dick was the first to speak. "I didn't think you would back down on the bargain too," he kidded. "I held out until last night, but by then I wanted to buy it so much that nothing could have stopped me."

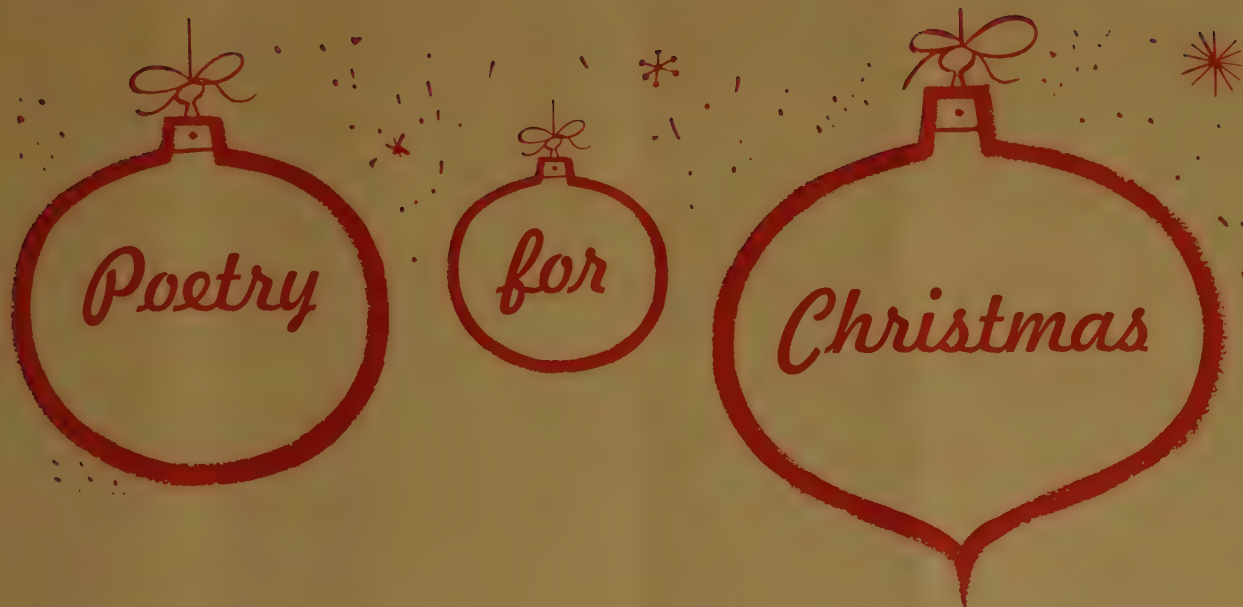
Nancy put back her head and laughed freely. "I did exactly the same thing. By five o'clock last night I knew I couldn't hold out."

"You know," said Dick as he took her coat and prepared to hold it for her, "I think we *did* learn something from our experiment. Now I understand much better what it means to give a gift because you want to give it, and not just because you know it's expected of you. I mean, I would have wanted to get you one anyway, but living under the pressure of that agreement for this last week, I got to where I had never wanted to do anything for anybody so much in my life."

Nancy smiled happily. "Same here." She began to button her coat. "And the more I learned about what it means to want to give a gift so much that it aches, the more it meant to give to everyone else as well."

Dick was thoughtful. "I think I know the reason why we say every Christmas, 'I just can't get the Christmas spirit this year.' It's because after that first year when we borrow money from Mom and Dad and run out proud as you please to buy them

(Continued on page 28)



When Angels Sing

The angels sang in Bethlehem,
Upon a winter's night,
To wakeful shepherds in the fields,
Bedazzled by the light
That led them with expectant awe,
To the Holy Baby in the straw.

I heard the angels sing this year
When leaves were turning red,
Above a humble bungalow,
Where God had found a bed.
And that small house of love and prayer
Blessed everyone who tarried there.

In summer or in winter,
In your house or in mine,
Love still comes down from heaven—
And this shall be the sign—
When hearts and homes are listening,
Once more the blessed angels sing.

—belle chapman morrill



The Father

He held the infant gently in his arms
While Mary slept upon a straw-made bed.
"Is this, a tender babe, the Promised One
Whom God has sent?" the father softly said.

Then suddenly, a star shone in the sky,
And on the lowly stable cast its light.
Now Joseph knew. "Oh, thank you, Lord," he prayed,
"For giving us your Gift this blessed night."

—sue h. wollam

Christmas Eve

A gladness warms the wintry night,
The season's cheering, eager glow
Is caught by stars above alight,
Reflecting candlelight below.
The halls are gay with evergreen,
And vibrant music fills the air.
The snow abets the magic scene
Of beauty rich and deep and rare.

Somewhere the sleigh-bells gaily ring
And laughter punctuates the sound.
Somewhere a hundred voices sing
And words of cheer are passed around.
All loveliness combines to weave
The sights and sounds of Christmas Eve.

—florence pedigo jansson



There Was Magic

The place was dark and very still
Under a star-filled sky.
Night looked down on the quiet town
While a weary girl, with gentle sigh,
Rode carefully, patiently, slowly by.

Hay was sweet in the darkened barn
Where cattle lay at rest.
"Will this do, my dear?" There was awe and fear
In Joseph's heart. He had done his best
To find a place for this prophet's test.

The girl's tired eyes held magic
As Joseph lifted her down.
"It is good," she said. He made her bed
While night wrapped her close in blessed gown,
And stars came to fashion her Baby's crown.

—lucia moore

When we think of December, we usually think of Christmas, which, of course, brings a holiday from school. Holidays mean party good times—and what can be more appropriate for this season of the year than a lucky star party?

As the house will probably already be decorated for Christmas in the usual red and green colors, all you will need to add are the stars, strings and strings of them. Any colors can be used in the stars—blue, silver, gold, white—all will blend well with the decoration colors.

the room is atwinkle with the reflected light from the colored stars.

To keep the early arrivals occupied until the latecomers are ready to play games, have pictures of famous people numbered and pinned up on the walls, curtains, and drapes. Hand each arrival a pencil and sheet of paper and announce that a reward will be given to the one who has guessed correctly the greatest number of "stars."

Shooting Stars. Divide the players into two or more groups

with red chalk so that it will leave a red dot on the white paper star where it hits. The player stands about three yards in front of that group's star target, takes aim, and shoots. The scorekeeper records the number closest to where the arrow hits. This is repeated with each member of each team. When all have had their turn, the scores are added up, and the team having totaled the largest score in points is proclaimed winner.

Falling Stars. Give each player a six-inch paper star and



A LUCKY A

by Loie Brandom



You can cut out the stars from colored art paper, so that they will be the same color on both sides. Tie a knot in a string, and through the small hole in the center of the star, slip it up to the knot. Then make another knot in the string six or eight inches from the first knot (depending on the size of the stars), and continue in this way until you have a string of stars long enough to loop over doorways, windows, or the fireplace. Other strings of stars can be suspended from the central lights to the corners of the room and so on until

of equal size, depending upon how many guests are present. For each group have ready a large sheet of white paper upon which a star has been sketched. Each point of the star has been given a different number 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, and a small circle, or bull's eye in the center of the star is marked with 100. The members of each group line up in position as for a relay race. A scorekeeper is appointed for each group or team, and the number one contestant on each team is handed a toy bow and arrow. The tip of the arrow is rubber

choose someone to be catcher. The players may carry their stars in their hands as long as they can skip about the room without the catcher's getting close to them; but when they get into a dangerous corner, the only way they can keep from being tagged is to let their star fall to the floor and keep the left foot touching the star while, at the same time, they are patting the top of their head with their left hand and rubbing the left elbow with the right hand. Any player tagged by the catcher when not in this position must exchange places with the catcher.

A Star Guessing Game. After the above active game the guests will probably be glad to sit quietly for a time while trying to figure out the following stars. After distributing pencils and paper, post the following questions where all may see them. Or, if the hostess desires, she may read the questions slowly, one at a time. The one correctly guessing the most answers wins the contest. The "star" questions are the following:

1. What star is named for a town?

11. What star is a favorite gem for ring settings?

12. What star is a National Emblem?

The correct answers are 1. Star of Bethlehem; 2. North Star; 3. starboard; 4. starch; 5. start; 6. starling; 7. starvation; 8. Star Spangled Banner; 9. starlet; 10. starfish; 11. star sapphire; 12. stars and stripes.

A Star Hunt. Before the company arrives, stars of different colors have been hidden in the rooms by the hostess. At a given signal all the guests start looking

lines, or stretch strings in a straight line from the starting tape to the goal, one for each team. The first player on each team is handed 25 cents and is asked to throw his head back, so that he can gaze upward at the stars, place the quarter on his forehead, and walk the straight line to the goal. When he reaches the goal, he may take the quarter to the next player in his group, who repeats the performance and so on. Any contestant who gets both feet off the line at the same time must go back and begin again. This is where the fun begins. It's quite difficult to keep



2. What star is called the sailor's friend?

3. What star is often mentioned on shipboard?

4. What star is useful in the laundry?

5. What star is the beginning of a race?

6. What star is the name of a bird?

7. What star do you find where there is a famine?

8. What national hymn has a star in its name?

9. What is a little star called?

10. What star is found living in the water?

for stars. At the end of five or more minutes, depending upon how many are in the hunt, the hostess rings a bell, and all sit down to add up their total scores. Each star bears a number. Red stars count twenty-five points; green, twenty; white, fifteen; yellow, ten; silver, five; orange, two; and the gold star, of which there is but one, counts fifty. A prize goes to the one having the highest score.

Star Gazing. Divide the contestants into teams of four each, and line them up behind the starting tape. Draw white chalk

your feet in line when you are star gazing.

Small packages of star-shaped cookies, wrapped in oiled paper and tied with red ribbons, make suitable prizes for the members of the winning team in this contest. Prizes for the other contests might be calendars for the coming year, books for mounting snapshots, candied red apples, or peppermint candy canes.

Ice cream served with plenty of star-shaped cakes or cookies, and hot cocoa, or a cold soft drink will top off the event perfectly and make it one to be long remembered.

Worship in the Family with Children

To Use with Younger Children

The Best Christmas

"How soon till Christmas?" Elsie asked one morning.

"About four weeks," Mother answered, "and we'll need that long to get ready."

"What do we need to do to get ready?" Ernest asked.

"Plan surprises, make the house look pretty, mail cards—oh, lots of things," Mother replied.

"Let's begin," Elsie said.

"Help me clean up the house first," Mother suggested.

Soon everything was shining clean. "Now let's begin," Elsie said.

"All right," Mother agreed. "Whom would you like to surprise?"

"Mrs. Smith likes cookies," Elsie said.

"So do Aunt Olive and Uncle Bill," Ernest added.

"You can help mix cookies and pack them," Mother said, "and you can deliver them on Christmas morning."

"Billy likes to draw," Ernest went on.

"You have a lot of drawing paper," Mother said.

"I'll give some to Billy," Ernest decided.

"We'll wrap it up to look pretty," Mother added.

"Jane's doll needs a new dress. Will you make it?" Elsie asked.

"That would not be your gift," Mother explained. "How can we plan so it would be?"

"If Elsie did something so you had time to make it, would that make it her gift?" Ernest asked.

"Indeed it would," Mother said. "What could you do?"

"I could dust every morning," Elsie offered.

"Fine," Mother approved. "While you dust, I'll sew, and that will be your gift to Jane."

"Daddy said this morning he soon would be out of shaving lotion," Ernest said.

"That takes money," Mother said.

"We could save some from our allowance," Elsie said. "Could we earn some extra?"

"What can you do?" Mother asked.

"After the doll dress is made, could we still dust and run the vacuum for money?" Ernest asked.

"I think so," Mother said.

"Well, then," Elsie said, "let's get to work!"

Busy days followed. Both children worked with a will. The house was decorated. Cookies were baked. Surprises were wrapped in pretty paper. Cards were mailed.

One day Mother said, "In two days it will be Christmas. When we are busy, the time seems to pass faster."

Then it was Christmas Day. The children could hardly wait to deliver their surprises. As they started out, Ernest said, "This has been the best Christmas!"

—Harold Lambert Studios



Theme for December:

Christmas

A Word to Parents

The materials on this page and on the next two pages are for your use in moments of worship with your children. If you have a family worship service daily in your home, some of the materials here may be used at that time. If you use *The Secret Place*, you may find that some of them fit into the meditations in that booklet.

To Use with Older Children

How a Christmas Carol Was Born

Christmas would not be complete without singing carols. The one printed on this page is one of the best loved of all the carols. It was written on Christmas Eve, 1818, by Joseph Mohr, a young Austrian priest.

The priest and the church organist, Franz Gruber, were good friends. Both of them loved good music. They often talked about the "perfect" Christmas song, and were disappointed that no one had, as yet, written it.

On this Christmas Eve the young priest sat in his church study thinking about the service he would conduct the next day. He looked out on the snow-capped peaks of the beautiful Austrian Alps. The stillness of the night, the beauty of the scene before him, the joy of the Christmas season filled his mind and heart.

"Jesus the Savior is born," the young man said to himself. Suddenly, all that he had thought and said about the "perfect" Christmas hymn began to form into words and phrases in his mind, and he wrote them down.

Early the next morning, Mohr hurried with his precious words to the home of Franz Gruber.

"Here, friend," he said, handing the paper to him. "See how these words sound."

Gruber read them and exclaimed, "You have found the perfect song!"

Gruber at once sat down to compose the melody. It came quickly from his pen just as we sing it today. The two friends sang the song together to have it ready for the service that night.

When the villagers gathered at

the little church, Mohr and Gruber sang "Silent Night." The people liked it very much. It then lay forgotten.

Almost a year later the song was played to test the church organ as it was being repaired. The repair man liked it, too. He asked for a copy to take to his home across the mountains. Here it was sung by a quartette who later sang it in the great cathedral in Leipzig, Germany.

Everyone who heard the song liked it.

When Emperor Frederick William IV heard it, he liked it so well that he ordered it to be placed first on all religious Christmas programs.

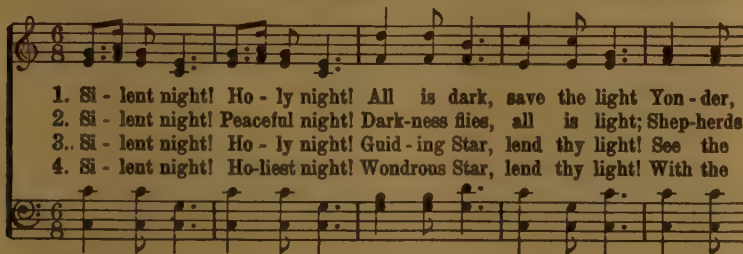
This carol, printed in 1854, has been a priceless gift to the keeping of Christmas.

Silent Night! Holy Night!

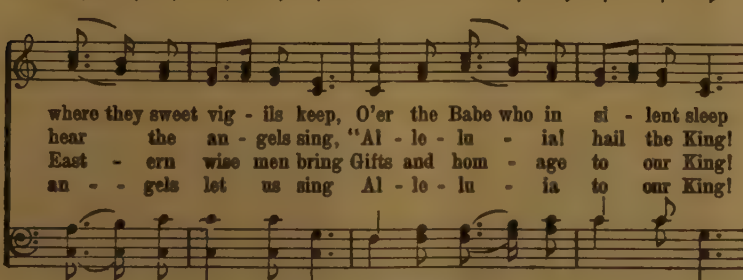
Rev. Joseph Mohr.

Christmas Carol.

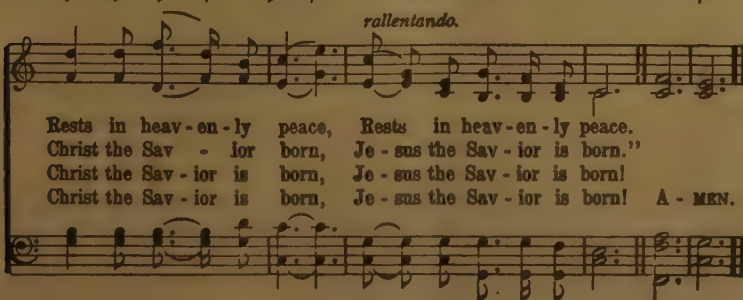
Franz Gruber.



1. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is dark, save the light Yon - der,
2. Si - lent night! Peaceful night! Dark-ness flies, all is light; Shep-herds
3. Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Guid - ing Star, lend thy light! See the
4. Si - lent night! Ho - liest night! Wondrous Star, lend thy light! With the



where they sweet vig - ils keep, O'er the Babe who in si - lent sleep
hear the an - gels sing, "Al - le - lu - ia! hail the King!
East - ern wise men bring Gifts and hom - age to our King!
an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our King!



rallentando.
Rests in heav - en - ly peace, Rests in heav - en - ly peace.
Christ the Sav - ior born, Je - sus the Sav - ior is born."
Christ the Sav - ior is born, Je - sus the Sav - ior is born!
Christ the Sav - ior is born, Je - sus the Sav - ior is born! A - MEN.



For Family Worship

Plan a worship center, using Christmas greens, the Bible open to Luke 2, and a nativity picture or a crèche.

Call to Worship:

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.—Luke 2:4-7.

Song: Sing the song on page 19 or use the primary pupils' books for fall to choose from the following: "The Sleep of the Baby Jesus," year one, page 39; "Away in a Manger," year two, page 34; "What Can I Give Him?" year three, page 41.

Poem: Use the poem on this page or use the primary pupils' book for year two, fall, and choose between "Christmas," page 42, and "Christmas Joy," page 43.

Meditation: Plan your own meditation based upon your favorite Bible passage related to Christmas or upon the call to worship, or use the ideas given here.

Christmas is a time of loving and giving. God was the first to love. He was the first to give. He gave his Son, Jesus, the Christmas Baby, as the best gift to the world. We, too, may love and give at Christmas.

Prayer: Pray your own prayer of thanks and gratitude for this happy day, use the litany or the prayer printed on this page.

Song: Use another song from the list suggested earlier.

Story: Using the primary pupils' book for fall, choose among the following: The story of the shepherds—year one, beginning on page 37; year two, page 35; year three, page 34; the story of the wise men—year one, beginning on page 40; year two, page 37; year three, page 38.

I Know

I think I know
The reason why
Such loveliness
Is in the sky:
God made the moon
The stars, the sun,
His love shines down
In every one.

—*Florence Pedigo Jansson*

Morning Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for a restful night,
And thank You for this morning bright.
Keep us in Your love, we pray,
All through a happy Christmas Day.

—*Lee Barker*

A Christmas Litany of Praise

Joseph was sturdy and gentle and good,
Praise God for Joseph!

Mary was patient in traveler's hood,
Praise God for Mary!

Innkeeper made room in the stable rude,
Praise God for Innkeeper!

Shepherds made haste to the manger bed,
Praise God for shepherds!

Wise men laid gifts at the young King's feet,
Praise God for wise men!

The birthday of Jesus we lovingly keep,
Praise God for Jesus!

—*Mazelle Wildes Thomas*

—*Harold Lambert Studios*



THE CAMEL BELL

by Eleanor Hammond



—Illustration by Winifred Jewell

It was one of young Joel's daily tasks to bring water from the well in the middle of the town of Bethlehem to fill his aunt's water pot. It was a tedious task carrying water morning and night, but since Joel was an orphan and dependent upon his father's brother for food and shelter, the water carrying was no great thing to ask in return. There were not too many things which a small boy could do for his board, and Joram the brickmaker was not a rich man. Every member of the household worked hard.

As Joel stood waiting his turn to draw water from the town well, he listened absently to the gossip of two women who had reached the well before he did.

It was twilight, and a very bright star had come out low in the sky, on the other side of the town where the inn stood.

"The shepherd, Reuben, says that the sky seemed to open and that angels came toward the earth singing," the younger woman was saying.

"A pretty tale," the older woman said. "But no doubt that the herd boy dreamed it."

"It is true enough that a baby was born in the stable behind the inn," the other woman said. "I feel sorry for the young mother. They say she has no better cradle for the child than one of the mangers."

Off in the twilight the faint tinkling of bells sounded. Joel tried to see whence the sweet sound came. It must be that some rich traveler with a camel was coming into the town. Only rich travelers from far-off places rode on camels, especially camels wearing bells.

The two women walked away, talking. Joel stood listening. Certainly, the sound of camel bells was growing closer.

Then the tall beasts loomed almost above Joel. There were three of them. As they came closer Joel could see the rich fittings of the saddles and bridles, the handsome strings of brass bells that made the ringing sounds.

"Can you tell us the way to the inn?" The finely dressed man who leaned to ask the question must be some foreign prince. Joel had never seen such beautiful robes nor such a magnificent and strange head-dress.

The little boy was struck almost wordless by the great camels, the richly dressed riders.

"The inn? There—where that big bright star stands in the sky," Joel gasped, pointing.

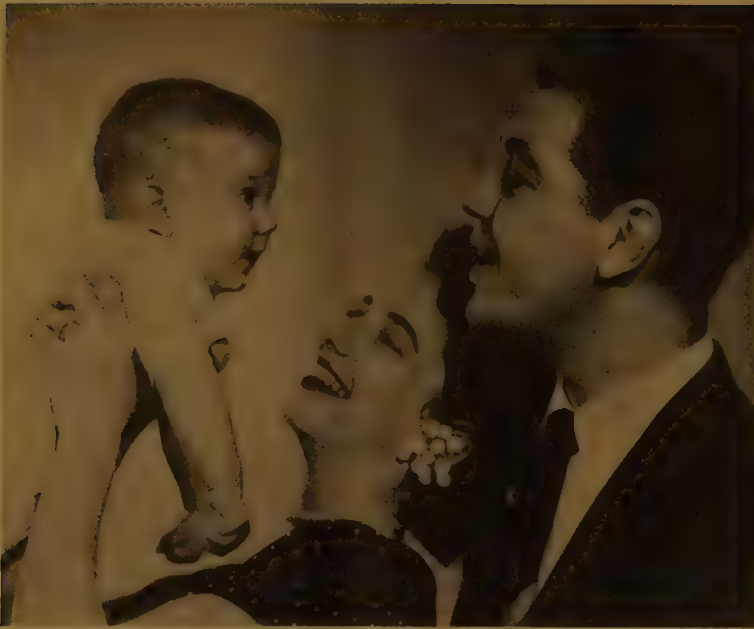
"Yes, we have followed his star to this town," the rider smiled. "This then must be our journey's end."

One of the other strangers nodded. "That star seems to rest here," he said. "It must be that the Christ Child, he whom we seek, is here."

"Have you heard of such a great happening in your town?" the third man asked Joel.

(Continued on page 30)





Study Article and Guide for Parents' Groups

Parents should teach their children while they are small to appreciate the many things that God has put in the world for our enjoyment and well-being.

Your picture may have been printed in a popular magazine recently. An advertisement pictured two hands, one very small and pudgy, reposing trustfully in another which was large and strong. The title underneath was, "Security."

This was an apt title; for there is no greater security on earth for a child than the loving protection provided for him by his parents. The caption could have also been "Responsibility"; for children's faith and dependence impose heavy responsibilities upon their parents for care, education, and example in right living. Still a third title would have been equally fitting: "Stewardship."

In reading the proceedings of juvenile courts one frequently comes across the phrase, "released in the custody of his parents." American courts did not initiate this procedure. From the ancient days of the first human family to our time, God has placed children "in the custody of their parents." Indeed, this seems to be his master plan for children's protection and development. Mothers and fathers share with God in creation. They become custodians of life and love as personified in their child.

There is a similar involvement in Christian marriage. A couple surrender to each other in love; each becomes guardian of the other's future, character, religious faith, and happiness. To the degree that we believe that God is in Christian marriage, for us this power of one over the other is God-entrusted. All members of a family have custody of the happiness and destiny of the rest. The Christian family misses much of its unique significance when it fails to understand how profoundly interpersonal relations within the home affect the religious development of family members.

One word in particular would seem to be indis-

pensable to the Christian message. That word, Father, could be so filled with associations of fear, pain, and unpleasantness, that a child would find unintelligible the Christian gospel of the Father's love. On the other hand father-child relations may predispose a child to respond to God's love.

Quite frequently stewardship is construed to mean proportionate giving to the church or the financial program of the church. Important as these may be, and admittedly they are important in their own right, they are but superficial implications or evidences of Christian stewardship. Stewardship is a part of our total Christian commitment to God in Christ. It refers specifically to our use and direction of things and powers placed in our control. Realizing the unique and profound influence of family experiences upon the personal growth of all members of the family, Christian families exercise this influence as an opportunity from God.

Discussing the irresponsibility of a neighbor, a young husband and father of two small children said, "He is a good guy, but his house is full of things that he got with no down payment, and now he thinks that they're his." The man's sales resistance is a symbol of thousands of people who accept all of the blessings of life as free gifts, no obligations attached. Such, however, is not the fact of life. Every one of you reading this article is obligated by your acceptance of certain benefits or advantages to those (or to God) who provided them. Take a quick look at these four sources of enrichment of your life.

As a Christian you share a heritage and a power which you neither created nor earned. The Christian church, the Holy Bible, and the gospel itself are yours "without down payment." Many people

No Down Payment

by Richard E. Lentz

act as though these great blessings cost no one anything. Nevertheless, by the efforts, sacrifice, and devotion of countless men and women who have lived before our time, we have a brotherhood, a congregation, and a Bible to bless our life. Stewardship is grateful recognition of indebtedness coupled with careful transmission of those blessings to other people.

Great telescopes, powerful microscopes, and color photography have made our vast and wonderful universe commonplace knowledge. Nevertheless, all of the marvels of the world only enhance the God who created them.

Individuals and groups today control powers that would have staggered the imagination of our ancestors. Our automatic devices and rapid, extensive communication place in our hands tremendous potentialities.

Welfare services surround us today. Human compassion and skill are organized to help the sick, indigent, or troubled. Within moments in an emergency millions of dollars and thousands of workers are available for rescue and relief work. Potentially, you are the beneficiary of these welfare services; you may be the next victim. How blessed it is to live in an organized, compassionate society, one cannot know until he receives the ministrations of rescue or rehabilitation crews.

Does this seem remote from Christian stewardship? *Christian stewardship is fulfilling one's obligation as a Christian.* Surely, we are under some obligations because of the richness of our blessings. Through these God has made us custodians. We are the only ones who can give his gifts to future generations.

Christian stewardship is acting responsibly in the use and direction of one's inheritance. Support of

the church by financial contributions and the dedication of one's talents in leadership are logical expressions of appreciation for one's heritage. There are others. The bearing of Christian witness in factory, school, or social group is commitment also. The guidance of one's family in Christian growth over the years is grateful response to God's goodness and to the richness of life as God has created it.

Christian families play a double role in the area of stewardship. Through their family group life in the community and in the church they manifest the quality of their commitment to God. A family group as a unit bears corporate witness to the Christian belief that this is God's world and that in it men and women should seek to serve him as their supreme loyalty. The Christian family is the nurturing environment of religious faith and devotion. The Christian family must so live its life that each member will be stimulated to give himself completely to God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

How may families of the church carry this two-fold responsibility of Christian stewardship? Perhaps we should separate the two. How does a family develop in its members a sense of commitment, of dedication to God. The second, how does a family meet its Christian obligations to society, the church, and God?

Children appreciate life's blessings only as they become aware of them. Adult conversation often can quicken a child's curiosity or sharpen his powers of observation. Family activity and travel may be made occasions for developing appreciation by children of God's world. Gratitude can develop only after appreciation.

The simple lessons regarding waste or extravagance are beginning lessons in Christian stewardship. Food

left on the plate to be thrown away, toys broken or left exposed to the weather, clothes torn or lost through carelessness—all these are opportunities to stress conservation, economy, and respect for property. This is respect for God's world and responsible use of part of it.

Life is sacred—or so we Christians believe. Great care should be exercised, then, in encouraging chil-

dren to protect life rather than to destroy it. Needless killing of insects, animals, or reptiles is irreverence! Often children kill in fear, but they can be taught not to fear God's creatures.

The child's own body and mind are a part of God's creation. Stewardship is conservation of time, energy, and health. Nearly every family is concerned about these matters, but the basis of Christian con-

Study Guide

Preparation for the Meeting

This includes three different kinds of preparation. First, there is the preparation of the leaders. Then there is the guidance for group preparation for participation. Finally, there are the provisions for promoting attendance.

The leaders should read the article, and they will follow this with reflection upon the biblical references. As many of the suggested readings as available should be read. Since the plan for this session involves use of the case study method, a knowledge of that method should be secured if the leaders are not familiar with it.

Members of the group should be expected to have read the article before coming to the meeting. If invitations or reminders are sent to them, several provocative questions might be included both to stimulate interest and to initiate thinking on the subject prior to the meeting: Do your children have difficulty handling money? Who handles your family income?

Everyone who would be welcome at the meeting should be informed of it

through posters, the church paper, and other media.

Conducting the Meeting

For this meeting as outlined you will need a general chairman and three discussion leaders. The latter may or may not be appointed in advance.

The program will develop as follows: devotional period; explanation of the purpose and plan of the meeting; division of the group into three discussion groups; discussion by the three groups, each using one of the case histories; reassembly of the whole group for sharing case solutions; general discussion of Christian stewardship, drawing implications from the suggestions offered by the three groups; summary by the general chairman; and a closing hymn and prayer.

The chairman may state the purpose in his own words: to explore the implications for Christian family life of our belief in the sovereignty of God as Creator and Father of mankind; to discover the meaning of Christian stewardship for our families. We shall be using three hypothetical families to stim-

ulate our thinking (see "Case Histories for Discussion Groups").

Have each discussion group study the case of one of the hypothetical families. These groups are requested to bring to the whole group three or four specific suggestions for solving the problems of each family. One member of each group will read aloud the case study assigned to that group. Allow twenty minutes for each group to prepare and discuss their family case.

When the twenty minutes have concluded, the general chairman should call everyone together for the sharing of suggestions.

Resources for the Meeting

Biblical references helpful for leaders and group members: Genesis 1:1-31; Psalm 50:7-12, 23; Micah 6:6-8; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Matthew 6:34.

Collateral reading: *Teaching Children Stewardship*, Glenn McRae, 1954.

How Christian Parents Face Their Problems, J. C. Wynn.

Financing Faith, Harriet Harmon Dexter.

The Family Is Stewardship, Florence Sly.

All of these books are available from the Christian Board of Publication.

Case Histories for Discussion Groups

Case 1. Young Mr. Hamilton is a successful personnel director for an established industry. His salary is \$7,000 per year. Recently, he was invited to become personnel director for a whiskey distillery at \$14,000 per year. No more work or responsibility is involved in this job than in the other one. Neither he nor his wife drinks alcoholic beverages. He considers accepting the offer and giving a tithe to his church.

Problem: Should he accept the new position?

Case 2. Mr. and Mrs. Frederick are eager to teach their seven-year-old son the value of money. They give him an allowance, but he has household duties to perform to earn his allowance. Some of the money that he earns he gives to his Sunday church school class regularly. His grandmother, however, insists on giving him extra money—a dollar quite frequently. The boy has begun to neg-

(Continued on page 39)

cern is reverence for the body as a gift from God.

Now, briefly, let us consider the family group's obligations. Increasingly, Christian families are developing ways of discussing together their common interests and problems. Prominent in these discussions usually are budget and spending problems. As these family deliberations are related to the family's religious faith, decisions will reflect the priori-

ties dictated by religious loyalty. Open and honest talks of family income, church budget, and personal needs of each family member will help everyone to think intelligently about the problem. Family conversation and worship may supplement the family council discussion of obligations by adding an awareness of the family's debt to the church, society, and God.

BIBLEGRAM

by Hilda E. Allen

Guess the words defined below and write them over their numbered dashes. Then transfer each letter to the correspondingly numbered square in the pattern. The colored squares indicate word endings.

Reading from left to right, you will find that the filled pattern will contain a selected quotation from the Bible.

A Gadgets used for opening locks -----	1 113 60 129
B The little Miss who sat on a tuffet -----	37 6 118 132 55 21
C Sailor's way of saying "hello" -----	108 20 115 38
D Come to a boiling point, especially in anger -----	28 62 66 44 105 71
E Instruments used in doing work, as hammers, saws, etc. -----	8 31 35 127 25
F Great-grandmother wore them to make her skirts stand out -----	92 101 117 4 33
G Like the rope on which acrobats walk -----	131 45 19 123 104
H Ottawa is its capital -----	52 43 36 78 15 95
I What Snow White's dwarfs do while they work -----	48 98 9 29 91 41 3
J The boys who carry the golf bags -----	10 40 61 88 49 73 7
K One of the "ade" drinks -----	50 22 54 34 13
L Number of players on a cricket team -----	11 63 75 65 77 121
M What the lumberjack shouts when a tree is ready to fall -----	111 64 59 72 93 17

N A bucking horse -----	82 32 23 47 70 125 46
O Equipment for horseback riders -----	134 56 110 81 51 80 114
P Kind of summer that comes in the late fall -----	18 96 100 89 68 26
Q Envious -----	5 2 12 79 99 24 39
R Turned, as on an axis, like some doors -----	74 27 76 126 83 42 102 128
S Tones down, or makes less hard -----	86 16 30 135 87 69 107
T A type of nose -----	67 124 94 133 116
U What we look for when the ground hog comes out -----	85 112 120 14 53 122
V Obeys -----	119 106 109 58 103
W Pigs -----	90 97 130 57 84

(Solution on page 28)

	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	
11	12	13	14		15	16		17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		30	31	32
	33	34	35	36		37	38		39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47		48	49	50	51		52	53
54	55		56	57	58		59	60		61	62	63
64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71		72	73		74
75	76	77	78	79	80	81		82	83	84	85	86
87	88		89	90		91	92	93		94	95	96
	97	98	99		100	101	102	103		104	105	106
107		108	109	110		111	112	113		114	115	116
	117	118		119	120	121		122	123	124		125
126	127	128	129		130	131		132	133	134	135	



—Eva Luoma

by Blanche Secor Longman

case, however.

Reread the account of the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, and you will realize what fancy clothes tradition has given this story. Here it is from the King James version, the second chapter of Luke (the only account in the Bible).

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."

Of course, other versions have translated some of the words somewhat differently, but the facts recorded are the same.

Where, for instance, does it say that Mary rode on a donkey? Where does it say how hard Joseph searched for a room? There is reported no conversation with the innkeeper. Nor is it stated that Mary and Joseph stayed in the stable of the innkeeper at all. Our dramatic productions invariably indicate that they did.

Now look at the shepherd's

Now that Christmas has come, we will all relive the beautiful stories of the birth of the Christ Child. Are the dramatic productions you see and hear your sole source of recalling these stories? How well do you know the Bible account as found in the early chapters of Matthew and Luke? (The other Gospels do not mention the birth of Jesus.)

You may be surprised at your reaction to the following statements. Are they all false, all true, or some false, some true? Place a "T" after the ones that you think are true, according to the Bible.

1. It was to Mary, alone, that God revealed the significance of this child, previous to his birth.

2. Mary rode to Bethlehem, while Joseph walked.

3. Mary and Joseph went all over Bethlehem looking for a room.

4. At first the innkeeper refused them a room, and then he told them that they might spend the night in his stable.

5. The shepherds saw a bright star in the sky the night Jesus was born.

6. The shepherds brought gifts to the Christ Child.

7. The wise men saw the star in the eastern sky.

8. The wise men found the babe lying in the manger.

9. These wise men were three kings.

10. The wise men made the long journey on camels.

It will be seen by reading the biblical account that none of these statements can be supported by direct reference. Yet they are a commonly accepted part of our traditional stories of the first Christmas. We have accepted them so thoroughly that most of them we do not even question. There are, of course, others which could be mentioned, also.

Many of these are, by implication, probably true. For instance, we believe that Mary must have ridden upon some animal, for, in her physical condition, it is unthinkable that Joseph would have started out with her on foot. The donkey was a common burden-bearing animal. Again, since the wise men came from the East, they must have crossed the desert. The Bible does not state these in either

The Christmas Story as We Make It

How well do you know the "real" Christmas story? Read this article to find out.

story, Luke 2:8-20 (the only account of this incident). We have been led to believe, by the artist's conception of this experience, that these men in the fields saw a star and followed it to the stable. They found Jesus there, in a manger. The account does not mention a star. It says, "the glory of the Lord shone around them"; "The angel said"; and "There was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host praising God." Not even does the writer of this story mention a great light. It is supposed the heavenly host would emit light. We have accepted light as a symbol of the presence of angels of God. The account does not tell us that the shepherds brought gifts. Tradition has it that they brought a lamb or a staff.

Reread the story of the wise men, Matthew 2:1-12.

Do you find in this account that the wise men saw a star in the eastern sky? It is commonly pictured so. Yet we read clearly that they said, "For we have seen his star in the East." Because East is capitalized, we must know that they saw it because they were in the East. It does not say that they were three in number, nor that they were kings. Nor did they find the infant Jesus in the man-

ger as our dramatic scenes have it. The text specifically states, verse 11: "And when they were come into the *house*, they saw the young child."

So much has been made of the importance of the mother of Jesus, that Joseph has become a mere figure to stand over Mary and Jesus, to complete the Holy Family. Yet in Matthew 1:18-25 we read God revealed to him, also, the importance of the child that was to be born to Mary. He was told how men would call him Emmanuel (God with us). Both he and Mary were told to name him Jesus. Furthermore, we fail to note that the journey to Bethlehem was "because he [not Mary] was of the house and lineage of David." We note, also, in Luke 2:27, "And when the parents brought in the child Jesus" (into the temple), to be blessed by Simeon, Joseph was accorded full equality with Mary.

These illustrations only indicate the many traditions which have grown up around the scripture passages. It is clear that we are more concerned to make beautiful pageantry than to teach the Bible. These trimmings come, no doubt, from efforts to fill in the missing

links of the bare narrative. Many of them are based soundly upon the customs of the day, and others are quite probable.

There is little doubt, however, that our desire to make entertaining performances of the first Christmas story has the effect of diverting our attention from the character and purpose of Jesus and his mission here on earth. This is especially true when these stories are dragged in for dramatic appeal on a commercial. In the mouths of those who depend upon the infant for their whole acquaintance with Jesus, these stories have become *stock* upon which to build a program to attract the attention of the public at this season of the year.

Certainly, there is no harm in using knowledge of customs and our imagination in making beautiful stories for Christmas celebrations; but let Christians reread each year the Bible accounts with care and discernment. We might even find satisfaction in speculating why the early writers left so much unsaid, and why they put down the stories at all. In any case, we should never let tradition take the place of what we read in the Gospel story as found in our Bible.

● No Christmas Spirit

(Continued from page 8)

Mrs. Wheeler's smile was like Mommy's when she kissed her good-night, and the look that came into her eyes was like the look that came into people's eyes when they were in church.

Then she started talking quietly. "Loving the Christmas story; thinking of giving rather than receiving; having good will toward all people. . . . Ruthie, I'd say you were full of overflowing with the Christmas spirit."

Mrs. Wheeler held out her arms, and Ruthie ran into them. "Oh, Mrs. Wheeler. . . . I didn't want not to have the Christmas . . . I'm glad. . . ."

She liked the way Mrs. Wheeler hugged. They smiled at each other as Ruthie started handing Mrs. Wheeler the Christmas tree ornaments.

Biblegram Solution

(Biblegram on page 25)

SOLUTION: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast." (Isaiah 56:2)

The Words

A Keys

B Muffet

C Ahoy

D Seethe

E Tools

F Hoops

G Tight

H Canada

I Whistle

J Caddies

K Lemon

L Eleven

M Timber

N Broncho

O Saddles

P Indian

Q Jealous

R Revolved

S Softens

T Roman

U Shadow

V Minds

W Swine

● Sunday Walk

I passed some lovely homes today,

With windows bright and long,

With wide garages tokening

Where shining cars belong.

The patios were gaily decked,

The velvet lawns were green,

With lanes of stepping-stones
where flowers

Marched stately in between.

I came back to the old brick house,

And climbed the winding stair

To three small rooms beneath the
roof . . .

And found love waiting there.

—Catherine E. Berry

Snow Walk

A winter walk can be a time to find
A certain singing gladness in your
mind.

You and your son on snow-shoed
feet climb over

Great mounds of ice where once
grew yellow clover,

And trace the crooked tracks
across the snow

That mark where winter-birds and
rabbits go.

Or you may wander down the ice-
locked stream

That lies as though enchanted in a
dream.

And when toward home you turn
your thick footfall,

A hundred frost-hung trees you
may recall.

And all the joy of having been to-
gether

Adventuring in snow-bright winter
weather.

—Jean Hogan Dudley

● I Believe in Santa Claus

(Continued from page 12)

really any Santa Claus?" When that happens, the mothers and fathers feel a little sad—but only for a minute. Right away they begin to feel happy that their child has begun to grow up, old enough to understand, old enough to think seriously of what Christmas stands for—what it means to follow the teachings of Jesus."

"Just like grown-ups!"

"Just like grown-ups try to do. And now that you know the secret, you'll have even *more* fun watching your little sister on Christmas Eve and on Christmas morning, won't you? Now you can help us make believe."

"That'll be easy!" Tommy said as he snuggled beneath the covers. "Because I really do believe in Santa Claus." And he grinned at Mother and winked his eye.

● Christmas Experiment

(Continued from page 14)

a present, the thing gets corrupted. What we did that first year because we wanted to do it, we begin to do because we feel it is expected of us. Well, this year we've got our Christmas spirit back again."

Nancy nodded. "And, Dick, there is something especially religious about it, too. Christmas is a time when we talk about God's gifts to us. Well, I bet this is the spirit in which God gives his gifts. He must give because he really wants to."

"Leave it to you to think of that," laughed Dick. "But you know, you're right. Hey! We better get going!" He opened the door. "It's just seven minutes until church time."



Family Counselor

Q. I enjoy your answers to questions. Will you please give me some simple steps in developing emotional maturity in adults and also in young children?

A. I trust you will not misunderstand me if I remind you that there are no simple steps that will bring about emotional maturity either in children or in adults. Unfortunately, some of the popular writings of our day give the impression that all one needs to do in order to develop the highest qualities of character is to think the right thoughts and follow a simple list of prescribed rules. Nothing could be further from the truth.

You realize, I am sure, that the development of maturity is a process that continues throughout life. There is a sense in which one never can achieve it—all he can do is to approximate it. Emotional maturity, you see, is not to be thought of in terms of certain stereotyped behavior patterns, but rather as the achievement of that quality of life that makes one a growing person, able to assume the responsibilities of life, and to maintain a humble, teachable spirit.

It is well to remember, too, that an emotionally mature adult has an open mind that endeavors to evaluate situations in the light of facts rather than prejudices. He gets more satisfaction out of giving than receiving and learns to form satisfying relationships with others. He has a purpose in life and uses his creative abilities to achieve it. He has a sense of values that gives him a true perspective of life. He puts first things first. He is neither a confirmed pessimist nor a naïve optimist. He is not a slave to his moods or thrown off

balance by defeats. He makes decisions and abides by them. He has a sense of moral and spiritual values that sustain him in the midst of the pressures of life.

Obviously, there can be no list of simple steps that will develop the quality of life just described. It may not be amiss, however, to note that one is not likely to become a growing person unless he recognizes his own immaturity, selfishness, impatience, and lack of self-discipline. Only then is he likely to develop a deep-seated desire to become a growing, mature person.

Sometimes this desire arises out

of crisis situations brought about by one's immaturity. Here is a man who lost his job because he "blew his top"; there is a woman who finds her husband's love waning because she is petulant, selfish, and demanding. In such a crisis each for the first time may realize the necessity of "growing up."

Furthermore, association with those who are mature tends to lift one out of his own immaturity. And need it be said that a Christian who is sincerely trying to pattern his life after that of Jesus and his teaching must inevitably be a growing person who is on the way toward emotional maturity?

Daniel M. Maynard

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"Guess what I want for Christmas!"

Paris

For So Comes Peace

He leaned against my chair confidingly.
But I, in my impatience, did not see
The eager, hopeful look in eyes upturned,
Nor sense the loneliness of heart that yearned
For close companionship. I brushed away
The small slight form. "Just run outside and play;
I'm busy now." But suddenly his smile
Gave way to hurt and disbelief; and while
Shame dyed my face, he stammered, "Mother, I
Don't mean to bother; I'll just stand close by
And look at you." . . . And then, I thought I saw
A world, rebuffed, strike back with tooth and claw,
A world grown sullen with each slap, each shove,
Whose greatest need is understanding, love.

Forgive me, Lord, that I should fail such need;
Give me a heart that understands, I plead.

—Cleo King

● Study Guide

(Continued from page 24)

lect his duties and to squander his money, for "Grandma will give me some more."

Problem: How may the Fredericks get Grandmother to co-operate in her grandson's education?

Case 3. Mr. and Mrs. Philips like to fish, and their three children often accompany them on fishing vacations. Although there are legal limits on a day's catch where they fish, Mr. and Mrs. Philips disregard their restrictions. Often they simply bury the surplus catch or throw it into the incinerator. One of the Philips' sons is studying social studies in high school and recently remonstrated with his father because of the conservation program.

Problem: How can the Philips' son convince his parents that they are doing wrong?

● The Camel Bell

(Continued from page 21)

The little boy stared up bewildered. "No. No great wonder has taken place in Bethlehem," he stammered. "Except that the town is very crowded now with folk coming for the taxing."

The three elderly men glanced at each other. "You in the town have heard nothing of the birth of a child?" he asked as if puzzled.

"Well—" Joel thought hard. "There has been some talk about a baby born in the stable behind the inn, because his parents could not find a place in the inn itself," he remembered. "And some shepherds watching their flocks by night in the hills outside the town have told of seeing an angel. But most folk say the shepherds dreamed it."

The strangers nodded to each other. "It is as Herod the king told us," one said. "The child born King of the Jews in Bethlehem. Let us hasten to bear our gifts to the stable behind the inn and to worship him."

Joel's dark young eyes grew round with amazement. Could it be true? Could the ancient words of the prophets have come true—now? Here in Bethlehem? "Do you mean the prophecies are fulfilled—about the coming of the Messiah?" Joel gasped.

"We believe it is so," one of the strangers told him kindly. "We must water our camels. Their journey has been hard and of many days. Then we must hasten to the inn stable."

Joel drew water for the three tall animals, whose thirst seemed almost endless. One of the foreign princes handed him a silver coin—as he thanked him.

At another time the possession of a silver coin would have filled all the little boy's thoughts. But now even this amaz-

ing wealth did not seem important. Joel's eyes followed the strangers, moving away into the twilight, going in the direction of the bright star and the inn.

His wondering was interrupted by his foot striking something that lay on the ground near the well. It was a pretty little brass bell—a camel bell.

"It must have dropped from one of the bridles," Joel thought. He held it in his hand, studying the clever workmanship, the fine designs etched into the metal. How sweet it sounded when he shook it!

"I must hurry after the travelers and return it to them. It is not mine," Joel told himself with a sigh. He would have liked to keep the beautiful brass bell.

The strange princes had said they were going to the inn. So Joel started in that direction.

Then he stopped, remembering his aunt's water pot. She would be waiting for the water that she had asked him to bring. It was a long way to the inn on the other side of the village.

"I must take my aunt the water for which she sent me," Joel decided with a sigh. "I have already been longer than she will like in fetching it."

He filled the jar and started carefully toward his uncle's house with it.

"The evening meal is ready," Rachel, his uncle's wife, told the little boy firmly. "There is no time for you to go all the way to the inn before we eat. You can take the bell to these strange travelers of whom you speak, in the morning. Certainly, they will stay in Bethlehem overnight, after a long journey."

It was hard to wait until morning. Joel was filled with impatience.

He rose before sunrise and hurried

across town to the inn. There were no camels in the courtyard of the inn. There were no princely strangers near the place.

"They have departed for their own country by another way," the kindly middle-aged man who was saddling a donkey just outside the stable told the little boy, when he had listened to Joel's story. "You cannot overtake them—and they will not miss one camel bell. I think you may keep the pretty bell for yourself."

"The baby—the child the foreign kings came to see—is he still here?" Joel asked timidly.

"He is here. His name is called Jesus," the young woman who had come to the stable door told Joel gently.

Joel gazed for a long, long time at the tiny, perfect face of the child in her arms. He was filled with a great joy and peace as he looked.

"We must leave," the man who now had the donkey saddled said after a while. "I am taking the young child and his mother upon a long journey—and we must be on our way."

Joel looked again at the beautiful young child, and smiled shyly at the mother.

"I—I would like to give him my camel bell," the little boy told the baby's mother. "Would you tie it around the donkey's neck—so little Jesus may hear its pleasant sound upon the journey?"

This story was used originally in the December, 1950, issue of *Hearthstone*. The author has since died.



BOOKS

for the hearthside



For Children

A simply told story of the coming of the Christ Child is **The Coming of the King**, by Norman Vincent Peale (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956, unpagged, \$2.00). The book includes incidents preceding and following the Nativity. After each incident is related, there is printed the scripture upon which it is based. The

book is very attractive. The beautiful end papers, the use of tint blocks with the scripture passages, and William Moyer's charming illustrations, which are on almost every page, combine to make this an appealing book.

A very attractive book that is bound to be a controversial one is **My Friend, God**, by Elaine St. Johns (E. P. Dutton and Co., 1956, 44 pages, \$2.75). The story is about five-year-old Kristen, who has a special friend, whom she calls "My Friend, God." The incidents are quite typical of a five-year-old; but the way that Kristen thinks and speaks of God is very mature for a child of any age. The manner in which the author identifies God with the forces of nature will run counter to the theology of many persons. This book is most attractive with four-color and black-and-white illustrations by Dorothy Teichman.

Children from 7 to 11 will enjoy **Matilda**, by Le Grand (Abingdon Press, 1956, 64 pages, \$2.00). Matilda was a goat who once lived in New York City, near Columbia University. How she was able to help the football team win and how she became a favorite of the students on the campus make an amusing tale. The hilarious pictures by the author add to this entertaining story.

Boys and girls from 9 to 12 will respond to the appeal of **Son of the Lamp Maker**, by Sterling North (Rand, McNally and Co., 1956, 62 pages, \$2.00). This is a might-have-happened story of Jeremy, who had become a thief in order to provide food for his sick father, his patient, loving mother, and himself. His meeting Jesus and the blessings that came to the family cause them to become followers of Jesus. How Jeremy tries to save Jesus from death and how he follows Jesus through all the sad hours to the resurrection makes a powerful story. The combination of the text and the illustrations by Manning deV. Lee will help to make children aware of the fact that it took more courage for Jesus to go to Jerusalem and face all that awaited him there than it would have taken for him to run away.

For Young People

Friendships between persons of different backgrounds provide interesting experiences as is borne out in **The Seminole Trail**, by Dee Dunsing (Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., N. Y., 1956, 211 pages, \$3.00). Here is a story of the Seminole War, with all its con-

fusions and misunderstandings that resulted in warfare, unfair treatment, hatred, suspicion, and at last some measure of reconciliation. Main heroes are young Rod, scout and interpreter for the Army, and Shakochee, his Seminole friend. The villain is a Spanish dealer in guns and gunpowder, who supplied the Seminoles with ammunition. The book is based on actual incidents of the Seminole War and offers a good insight into the history of the times.

A western girl in an eastern college for girls is the setting for **Palomino Girl**, by Amelia Elizabeth Walden (Westminster, Phila., 1957, 176 pages, \$2.75). Kit Kendall is a strong-minded, responsible girl who has managed her father's ranch in the Black Hills for a number of summers. This story of her senior college year is one that involves Kit and her three roommates in some exciting and complicated experiences. Of course, the problem is made no easier by the appearance of a three-letter athlete to tangle relations still more. There are some changes made in the personalities of all.

For Adults

Abingdon Press offers the following small devotional books that will be useful for private reading or as source books for worship material. **Walking in the Light**, by Marjorie Wilkinson (60 pages, \$1.00), is a book which discovers in the lives of different people from different centuries and countries the source of their strength and power. **Think About These Things**, by Jane Merchant (96 pages, \$1.50), is a collection of eighty-six meditations in poetry and prayer based on Paul's famous passage in his Letter to the Philippians from which the book's title is taken. **The Farmer Gives Thanks**, by Samuel R. Guard (64 pages, \$1.00), is a collection of fifty-six prayers written in the thought terms of a man of the soil. You will not find here the formal and conventional phraseology of prayer, but prayers as unorthodox in their beginning as this, "H'm-m-m, the incense of new-mown hay in the sun! H'm-m-m, the smell of rambler roses climbing our barnyard fence." **Men on Their Knees**, by Kenneth O. Eaton (96 pages, \$1.75), is a study of seven different prayers of the New Testament and what they mean for us today. These could be used for men's fellowship meetings for their devotional period.

Over the back fence

● Can Good Will Hope to Win?

Again the world is re-echoing to the ancient song, "Peace, good will toward men." With all the prevalence of the song at this season of the year, an insistent question gnaws at the modern mind: Just what hope is there for good will in our world? Can it hope to win in the midst of so many forces and powers that seem to contradict it? Can we ever expect good will to triumph over evil will?

It may be utter foolishness, or it may possibly be a kind of sublime "faith-fulness"; but we are convinced that an affirmative answer is a good risk!

This faith is held in spite of many individual incidents in history that show good will in defeat, *at the time!* The supreme illustration is Jesus on Calvary. There Perfect Good Will went down to overwhelming defeat—according to the short view. In the long view of history that defeat turned into something else entirely, an eternal victory.

It is a part of our faith to believe that that victory is still in the making—it is still being won. The march of Christianity across the centuries and around the earth is resulting in the enlargement of the areas where good will is in operation. It is a slow process. It is not necessarily inevitable or automatic. But it is visible, and there are signs everywhere to be seen that faith in the triumph of good will is not utterly fantastic. Look for those signs in your paper this month.

For our generation the question is, What chance has good will in the face of the possibility of nuclear warfare? Many a skeptic

will say that the present stalemate between the chief possessors of the hydrogen bomb is due not to good will but to fear of annihilation. But fear cannot be a permanent basis for a stalemate; something greater than fear must take its place, or we are all undone.

To paraphrase a scripture passage, perfect good will has power to cast out fear of nuclear destruction. This Christmas season it is our belief that God's Holy Spirit is at work through the church to bring us nearer to that time long since foretold, when "spears [will be turned] into pruning hooks," "swords [will be turned into] plowshares," and hydrogen bombs will be turned into energy to minister to the needs of all mankind.

● Good News Is Not News!

This may be putting the case a little too strongly, but there is much truth in it. The shepherds of old time heard "good news of great joy." They were told of the birth of a baby boy, and they hurried to see this which had come to pass.

A sobering exercise that one may practice almost any day is to survey the front page of his daily paper to discover how many items he can find which qualify as good news. If the identifying mark of news is its prominence in the newspaper, then good news is not frequently considered news.

For the most part it is the tragic, the calamitous, the spectacular, and the sordid which get the blue penciled "OK" as front page news. Listen to the newsboys as they shout their extras on your city streets. You will not often hear them announce anything which qualifies as good news.

If Jesus were to be born this month in any city or town in America, it would not be an item for the front page. Indeed, it does not matter much that it would not.

In the long run, however, now as in Bethlehem so long ago, it would be better than the best news to appear anywhere else in the paper.



—Harold M. Lambert



Who Gets "What" for Christmas?

It's an old, old question! We want to remember all our favorite people with gifts we know they will enjoy, and we want these gifts to be appropriate, useful and unique all at the same time. Well, here's the answer to your Christmas question. Select your gifts from the eight popular books listed below.

TEENS TO 21. *by Alberta Z. Brown.* An entertaining and practical book that deals with the needs and problems of today's young people as they face maturity. \$1.75

THE LAYMAN LEARNS TO PRAY. *by Lloyd V. Channels.* A firm but gentle guide to help the layman who is hesitant about praying. Prayer and the purpose of prayer are intelligently defined. \$1.50

WHAT MAKES AMERICA GREAT? *by W. Earl Waldrop.* A perceptive study of our nation and its people. A discussion of the ideas and ideals which make, and will keep, America great. \$1.50

APOSTLE OF FREEDOM. *by D. Ray Lindley.* A careful examination of the writings of Alexander Campbell to show his growth, maturity and Christian statesmanship. \$3.00

BERTHA FIDELIA: Her Story. *by Jessie M. Trout.* An account, written with penetrating insight, of the experiences and impressions of Bertha Clawson, a dedicated missionary in Japan. \$2.50

COME WORSHIP. *by Guin Ream.* A collection of 46 short worship services to help young people in their own attempt to worship God and to lead others to worship. \$2.00

FINDING HOLY GROUND. *by Harold L. Lunger.* Inspiring messages of faith, hope and courage. • A new understanding of love and devotion are conveyed in this book. \$3.00

CHRISTIANS TOGETHER. *by Maurice W. Fogle.* Transcending the barrier of time, Dr. Fogle makes the Book of Acts live again. Here is an accurate picture of biblical personalities. \$2.75

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